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**Why become a classics teacher?  
An exploration of career choice**

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# **WHY BECOME A CLASSICS TEACHER?**

## **An Exploration of Career Choice**

**Aisha Karen Ann Khan-Evans**

**Doctorate in Education  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to thank the participants for their cooperation in this study. They formed an exceptional group of student teachers and I am pleased, though not surprised, that they are all still thriving in their careers as Classics teachers.

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Finally, my parents supported me throughout my career and in my studies. They would have been proud.

For Kay and Imdad. I finished it.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the motivation of a group of graduates who have chosen to train as Classics teachers. Classics graduates have a relatively high employment rate, entering a wide range of careers. One such career is teaching. There has been a shortage of trained Classics teachers in recent years, with only two institutions in England offering the one year pre-service Post Graduate Certificate in Education. Although candidates are not always aware of how competitive the course is, their applications clearly suggest a determination to enter the profession. Research over a number of years has suggested that motivations for choosing a career in teaching can be broadly classified as altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic, with altruistic and intrinsic motivations generally shown to be dominant. In some countries, however, including the U.K., there has been a change in the general perception of the job of teaching, which might appear to make it a less attractive option than thirty years previously. Working conditions, salary and status are noted as contributing to this overall picture and one might expect prospective teachers to be aware of this, in which case, their altruistic and intrinsic motivations may have to be stronger than those of previous generations. There is a perception that prospective Classics teachers are a relatively homogeneous group from a specific educational background who may perceive the career differently for a number of reasons. On the other hand, this view may be misguided as the application and selection process shows that students have a variety of backgrounds and prior experiences and it is worth exploring, in fact, how similar their motivations are to each other, and to those choosing to teach other subjects.

An individual's prior experiences have been noted as influential in their view of teaching, as well as the potential impact of significant others. This thesis explores the reasons Classics graduates choose teaching as a career, whether inspired by teachers, by loved ones, or in some cases by seemingly arbitrary, albeit influential, events. The research draws on data collected from one cohort of PGCE students, including information given in an essay submitted at the start of the course, as well as individual interviews. This qualitative approach seeks to ascertain whether there are common factors, for example, in previous educational path or 'teacher-like' experiences. The

data indicated that influences were often absorbed subconsciously and only retrospectively acknowledged, in some cases only when thinking about the research project. One significant element in the data was an unusual sense of a 'mission' to maintain and indeed advance the position of Classical subjects in the curriculum: whether an early or late decision to enter teaching, the students seemed clear that there was something 'special' about teaching Classical subjects, often supported by their earlier experiences of the 'special' qualities of Classics.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of this thesis on the motivations to teach of a cohort of trainee Classics teachers. It explains the context of the study, including a brief account of the recent historical background to Classics teaching. It outlines the prompts from which the study arises and suggests the potential significance of such a study for the future of Classics teaching. Finally the chapter sets out the structure of this thesis.

## 1.1 Overview

This research study is concerned with the motivations of those who choose to train and qualify as Classics teachers via the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), a one-year full-time initial teacher preparation qualification. The PGCE course prepares student teachers<sup>1</sup> to teach a range of Classical subjects to 11-18 year olds in the secondary school phase. The PGCE focuses on Latin and Classical Civilisation but includes Ancient History and Classical Greek. Thus, it includes Classical languages and literature in the original (Latin and Greek), as well as the study of Greek and Roman civilisation and history through sources in translation (Classical Civilisation and Ancient History). Although Latin and Classical Civilisation are the most commonly taught Classical subjects in state-maintained schools, student teachers may also go on to teach Greek and Ancient History, depending on their qualifications and the demands of their schools. I will therefore use the terms Classics and Classical subjects to encompass all four elements available on the curriculum.

The study was prompted by a variety of stimuli. Firstly, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of PGCE places for Classics in recent years. In the mid-1990s there were four institutions offering such PGCEs and by 2002 only two (B. Lister,

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<sup>1</sup> I will use the terms student teachers and trainee teachers interchangeably.

personal communication, February 15, 2012). Over the last ten years the number of places on offer at those two institutions has also been reduced, from 36 in 2001 to 24 for the academic year 2011/12 (ibid.). In contrast, during that time, there has been a resurgence of interest in Classical subjects on the curriculum and new departments have been set up, as well as existing departments expanding their Classics offer (Hunt & Khan-Evans, 2010). Projects to increase the accessibility of Classical subjects have been set up, including the charity *Classics for All* and the Mayor of London's *Latin in London* scheme. Against this background, the supply of qualified Classics teachers has not been able to meet the demand, particularly in state schools, where the PGCE is most commonly required for employment as a teacher. In addition, schools in particular areas of the country, notably those at some distance from the two training institutions, have also found recruitment problematic. With the paucity of teachers training via the PGCE, it is therefore important that those recruited are not only well-qualified and suited to teaching, but that they are committed to the profession. As will be discussed, research suggests that the types of influences on motivation to teach are likely to have an effect on long-term commitment to the profession.

As subject director and tutor for the Classics PGCE at one of the two institutions, I have frequently observed, outside the world of higher education and/or teacher education, general surprise either that Classical subjects are taught at all in the twenty-first century or that they are in fact on the curriculum in a range of schools, including the state-maintained sector. Thus, there appears also to be an assumption that those training to teach are educated in the independent sector and take up posts in the same sector. Classics trainee teachers, however, come from a range of educational backgrounds and there has, in fact, been a general increase, in my institution, in the number taking up posts in the state sector. Many of those applying to the Classics PGCE have not studied Classical languages at advanced level while at school and have taken non-linguistic degrees. However, entry to the course requires a certain level of competence in Latin, since the majority of teaching jobs include some teaching of Latin, and some of the successful applicants will have studied Latin since the age of 11 or even earlier while others will have taken up the subject *ab initio* while at university. In addition, I have observed that many trainees have appeared to be protective of their subject. Having mentored and worked with PGCE students in another subject, both as a

serving teacher in school and at PGCE-level, I have observed what appeared to be a slightly different approach, both in terms of expressed motivation and in terms of the views of their subjects. I was therefore interested in considering the motivations of this relatively unusual set of trainee teachers. With the experiences above in mind, I wanted to explore to what extent their motivation is driven by the subject itself, as well as the extent to which the influences on their decision to teach might relate to factors in their own prior experience and to their future plans in teaching.

## **1.2 Context**

Much has been written about teaching as a career choice (Huberman, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2005). It is in some ways a unique occupation, perhaps the only one in which people feel they already have experience, undergoing an 'apprenticeship-of-observation' (Lortie, 1975: 65) while at school (see also Knowles, 1992: 101). It is also relatively unusual in that individuals are able to enter teaching at a variety of stages in their lives (ibid.: 38) and it might be assumed, therefore, that their previous experiences have been influential in their motivation to teach. In addition, teacher recruitment and retention have been problematic in the UK and elsewhere for a number of years (Ashby et al., 2008; Kyriacou, Kunc, Stephens & Hultgren, 2003; Menter, Hutchings & Ross, 2002; Reid & Caudwell, 1997). The motivation to teach will inevitably have an impact on these concerns and has therefore been the subject of a variety of studies. Teaching in shortage subjects, such as Science or Mathematics has generally received greater scrutiny than has teaching in other subjects (Barmby, 2006; Eick, 2002; Jenkins, 1998). Recruitment difficulties have led to measures such as the introduction of financial incentives for those entering teaching in those subjects.

In Classics teaching, the supply of teachers appears not to have met the growing demand in recent years but this issue has taken a low profile; Classical subjects have not formed part of the National Curriculum, although they are now included in the

present government's English Baccalaureate qualification<sup>2</sup>. In respect of the quality of applicants, recruitment to Classics teaching is not a concern; with a high ratio of applicants to places, it is possible to recruit well-qualified candidates. On the other hand, research by Dawes (2007) suggests that, each year, approximately 62 trained Classics teachers leave the profession and approximately 35<sup>3</sup> enter the profession. Studies have suggested that a substantial number, as many as 40 per cent, of those who enter teaching have left within five years (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 256). In addition, Ashby et al. (2008) reported that a high proportion, thirty per cent, of student teachers who completed their training did not subsequently take up teaching posts (p. 67). As observed above, the government currently allocates 24 Classics places for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, divided between the University of Cambridge and King's College London. A small number of opportunities have existed for entry to Classics teaching via the Graduate Teacher Programme<sup>4</sup>, providing employment-based training, but even taking these into account, fewer than thirty Classics teachers are trained per year. It is inevitable that candidates with potential to become successful teachers will not gain places, rendering it imperative to select candidates who are not only suited to the career but are likely to remain in teaching in the longer term.

The lack of attention to Classics teaching stems partly from its position outside the National Curriculum, and therefore as less commonly taught, and partly, perhaps understandably, from a perception of Classical subjects as the preserve of an élite, as restricted to the independent school sector. Although growth in technology and the economy in the nineteenth century, following the industrial revolution, led to some changes in English school curricula, many schools continued as they had done, with Classics at the core of the curriculum. At that time, the term 'Classics' referred to the study of Latin and Classical Greek language and literature, rather than including historical or civilisation topics and the literature was therefore studied in the original

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<sup>2</sup> The English Baccalaureate, or EBacc, is a measure introduced in 2010 to indicate the proportion of students achieving five C grades or above in a range of academic subjects.

<sup>3</sup> The research took place before the most recent reduction in places and it is now likely that fewer than 30 new Classics teachers are being trained each year.

<sup>4</sup>The Graduate Teacher Programme ends in 2013 and will be replaced by School Direct (salaried).

language. It was not until the 1960s, and an era of anti-authoritarianism, that a change in the zeitgeist in Europe and in British education affected the position of Classics. Economic and social change has naturally led to changes in education policy affecting all aspects of education, from the content of the curriculum to the requirements for teacher training. The period between the 1944 Education Act and the beginning of the 1960s saw teachers 'enjoy[ing] an unusual degree of latitude in curriculum matters' (McCulloch, Helsby & Knight, 2000: 13), while the second half of the twentieth century saw 'the ideal of teacher professionalism as curriculum control' threatened through the 'changing social and political context' (ibid.: 16). The position of Classical subjects in schools also changed dramatically from the 1960s onwards, when a 'revolution [began] to sweep through the ranks of classics teachers' (Taylor, 2008: 9). In 1960, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge dropped Latin O-level as an entry requirement. Alongside this, the reorganisation of education along comprehensive lines had begun with the Leicestershire plan in 1957 and in 1965 the Labour government's Circular 10/65 invited all local authorities to submit plans for the new pattern of schooling, which became mandatory under the 1976 Education Act (Ball, 2008: 70). Callaghan's Ruskin speech in 1976 called into question the suitability of the current education system for the economic situation, with 'concerns about the quality of teaching' as well as about the content of the curriculum (Menter, 2010: 15). While this speech launched the 'Great Debate' on education (Taylor, 2008: 17), debate on the teaching of Classics had also been instigated in the 1960s. The Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT) was established in recognition of the fact that Classics would have to change to fit in to, and be attractive in, the modern era (Forrest, 1996). To this end, much work was done by groups and individuals. Two JACT conferences in 1964 led to the Nuffield Foundation granting funding for a curriculum development project based at the University of Cambridge, with the resultant Cambridge Latin Course (CLC) published in 1970. This and other projects represented an attempt to move away from the 'Goodbye Mr Chips' earlier twentieth century stereotype, associated with an élitist perception of Classics, of dusty rooms and harsh discipline inflicted on those unable to conjugate a particular verb. The prime focus of the CLC was and remains the reading of Latin, in order to gain access to the literature and culture of the ancient world, rather than on 'parsing' sentences and declining nouns for its own sake. Reform, however, was not confined to Latin and the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation, as well

supporting the new Latin course, sponsored a Foundation Course in Classical Studies (Taylor, 2008: 10). In line with this, examinations in Classical Studies or Classical Civilisation were developed; Latin and Greek examinations were reviewed, with prose composition 'dethroned' (Taylor, 2008: 11). In short, the revolution 'left virtually no stone unturned' (ibid.). In spite of the move for change, many comprehensive schools dropped Classics from their timetables, through a combination of 'pressure from other subjects, a tendency to modernisation and even political opposition' (Bulwer, 2012: 126). Thus 'the campaign to have Classics included in the list of [National Curriculum] foundation subjects was lost' (Tristram, 2003: 13).

Teaching has, for many years, 'been a significant site of social and political struggle' (Menter, 2010: 13) and during the same period, as noted above, economic and social change affected the nature of teaching as a profession, in the face of the increased competition and marketization. By the time of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988, with the Conservative government seeking to change what they viewed as the left-wing and 'progressive' nature of teacher training (Whitty, 2009: 165), teachers held little power (Menter, 2010: 36). Alongside the National Curriculum and national testing for schools came a culture of performativity for serving and trainee teachers. This culture persisted with the new government and Furlong (2005) has argued that New Labour's Green Paper on teaching (DfEE, 1998) marked the 'final completion of a 30 year shift from the 'individualised professionalism' of the past to new forms of 'managed' and 'networked' professionalism' (Furlong, 2005: 120). Teacher shortages have marked much of the period since the 1980s, in spite of a variety of campaigns to improve the situation. If teaching has not been perceived as an attractive career option since then, the 'uncertainty and change and instability' (Menter, 2009: 227) of the twenty-first century suggest it will remain so for many.

Turning now to those who might consider a career in Classics teaching, the changes in the school curriculum outlined earlier had a substantial impact on higher education and universities began to adapt their undergraduate degree courses in a similar way to the adaptations which had begun in schools in the 1960s. It became possible to embark on a four-year Classics degree course without previously having studied Classical languages. In addition, alongside the 'substantial rise in [Classical Civilisation

A-level] entries since 1999' (Tristram, 2003: 18), non-linguistic degree courses were introduced. Many twenty-first century Classics graduates, therefore, do not have what might be viewed as a 'traditional' Classical education; that is, they may not have studied Latin or Greek while at school or indeed at university. Degrees now include disciplines such as Classical Studies or Civilisation and, as already stated above, undergraduates with no knowledge of ancient languages are able to undertake a range of courses, including those already mentioned, where they study Classical languages *ab initio*. Those applying for PGCE places are also likely to have followed a greater variety of educational paths than might previously have been the case. They will have come from a range of backgrounds, schools and university courses and some will have studied Latin from the age of eight, while others will have begun as undergraduates or even later.

As noted above, with only two institutions offering PGCEs in Classics, and the gradual reduction in the number of places over the last ten years, it is essential to select appropriate candidates. While PGCE courses, regardless of specialism, are concerned with recruiting suitable candidates who will complete the course and take up posts on qualification, with only twelve Classics PGCE places allocated to each institution, it is imperative to recruit those who will not only complete their training and take up teaching posts but are likely to remain in teaching longer-term. In addition to the increase in entries for Classical Civilisation A-level, recent years have seen a rise in interest in Classical subjects more generally in schools. For example, the number of state secondary schools in the UK offering Latin grew from 200 in 2004 to 459 in 2007 (CSCP, 2008). It is therefore also important to recruit candidates who are likely to contribute to this resurgence.

Although a Classics degree is not in itself self-evident preparation for a specific career, in fact Classics graduates enter a range of careers such as the Civil Service, the Diplomatic Service, law and accountancy (HEA, 2007) and teaching is certainly not the only option open to Classics graduates. Indeed several applicants have already spent time in other occupations and, as is no doubt the case for other subjects, those embarking on a Classics PGCE arrive at different ages and stages and have often followed a variety of paths prior to deciding to become a teacher.



### 1.3 The Study

In the context of the high quality and number of applicants to the Classics PGCE, alongside the paucity of student teachers trained and therefore the shortfall in terms of supply versus demand, this study seeks to explore the motivations of those entering Classics teaching via this route. It explores the views of this relatively unusual, currently under-researched, set of trainee teachers in what is considered a minority subject. The study considers the extent to which the subject itself is integral in the participants' desire to enter teaching; whether it is teaching which is attractive to them or whether it is something about teaching *Classics* specifically which attracts them and is the foremost attractor. Given the varied characteristics of successive cohorts of Classics PGCE students, the study also considers whether influences and motivations relate to the student teachers' prior experiences, educational path and background; to what extent their own experiences of school, and of Classical subjects at school, will have acted as inspiration for their future career; whether attendance at one type of school is likely to lead to a desire to teach in the same type of school.

In addition, since I am concerned with a longer-term commitment to teaching Classics, which is essential in sustaining the current resurgence of interest in schools, the study also considers the developing views of this same cohort of teachers, as they move from training into their first posts in a range of schools. Those who leave teaching appear to cite most frequently issues of workload, salary, including poor career prospects, pupil behaviour, and the low status of teaching (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 256). The study also explores the match between the student teachers' preconceptions of teaching and the reality they experience on the PGCE; to what extent this continues through their first year in post; and whether they view their future path in teaching and their longer-term commitment differently after a year in teaching. In short, this thesis explores the particular motivation and development of an under-researched group of teachers and, in doing so, addresses four research questions:

- 1) What are the factors influencing the decisions of a cohort of Classics graduates to train to teach?
- 2) To what extent is the decision to teach a decision to teach *Classics* specifically?
- 3) To what extent do differences in educational path and background relate to influences on the decision to teach?
- 4) How do the perceptions of a cohort of pre-service Classics teachers develop over their training and into their first year of teaching?

The following chapter examines a range of literature relating to teaching as a career choice, considering general findings on the type of motivation commonly observed, as well as some of the characteristics attributed to individuals who choose to teach. It outlines the relatively consistent findings of research on teacher motivation, which suggest that motivation to teach generally falls into the categories of altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with the first two dominating the range of reasons expressed. In some studies, altruistic influences such as the desire to contribute to society have been indicated as more important, as might be anticipated, but intrinsic motivation, such as the activity of teaching itself as well as engagement with a subject discipline, are frequently mentioned in other studies. Extrinsic motivation, however, is inevitably taken into account but the predominance of the first two motivation types appears significant in relation to long-term commitment to teaching.

Chapter three sets out the methodology and methods, situating the study in the interpretative domain. In it I outline the theoretical framework behind my qualitative stance and how this informs the data-collection methods employed in the study. The chapter describes the sample and the methods of analysis of their written and interview data.

The fourth chapter examines the findings from the three 'settings'; an assignment submitted by the participants as part of their first weeks on the PGCE and two

interviews, one conducted towards the end of their training and a second interview after their first year in teaching. It highlights some of the altruistic influences apparent but in particular the importance of intrinsic elements such as the significance of the subject and the interpersonal element in the choice to teach Classics.

Chapter five discusses these findings and suggests that there is a strong link between the desire to teach and the desire to teach *Classics*. It discusses the relatively realistic expectations of teaching held by these participants, which remained remarkably stable over the course of this study. The chapter raises a contradiction apparent in the study, in relation to the attachment to Classical subjects as an influence to enter teaching and the desire to increase the accessibility to Classics in schools. The strengths and weaknesses of the study are considered, as well as the implications and potential for further research.

Finally the conclusion reiterates the findings, as well as reaffirming the validity of the study. It explains the significance of these findings in terms of its contribution to knowledge.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This thesis presents a critical exploration of why some individuals have chosen to become teachers of Classics. One of the problems in assembling a review of what is known in this area, as well as considering the contributions of other relevant research in the field as a platform for further empirical work (Hart, 2001) is that, as yet, there are no studies that systematically and specifically consider the experiences, views and choices of occupation that have been made by Classics teachers. Thus, in this chapter, the literature review will draw on a range of related work in an attempt to provide a basis for the research that lies at the heart of this study. What follows will begin with a brief overview of what is known about choosing to teach and will draw on some of the key studies that explore motivations, what they are and how they play out in the choice to teach. The review will examine some of the major research findings that situate the decision to teach as driven largely by intrinsic and altruistic motives. The review will then turn to work which highlights some of the more pragmatic and perhaps extrinsic reasons that have been reported to account for why individuals choose to become teachers. The chapter will then explore some of the situated attributes such as background, gender and other aspects of biography as well as the wider political-policy context that play a part in this career choice-making.

Whether you like it or not, how you teach and how you learn to teach are bound up with your own personality, philosophy and values. Somewhere inside there is a set of personal standards – whether tacit or articulated, ill-informed or carefully thought out – that determine what shocks you, interests you or angers you about schools, and that serve as the benchmarks which you will use to guide and evaluate your progress as a teacher.

(Claxton, 1990: 18).

### **2.1 Motivations to become a teacher: a schematic overview**

For several decades researchers have explored the sorts of factors which influence the choice of teaching as a career. Influential and ground-breaking studies such as those conducted by Lortie (1975) and Kyriacou, Coulthard, Hultgren & Stephens (2002) have

explored the motivations for choosing teaching as an occupation and have argued that decision-making influences generally fall into three categories: altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Such studies argue that altruistic factors in choosing teaching may include notions of social justice encompassing a desire to help others and assist young people in reaching their potential (Lortie, 1975: 11; Kyriacou et al., 2002: 104; Manuel & Hughes, 2006: 11). They add that there are intrinsic factors inherent in the job of teaching that may include the desire to work with young people as well as maintain an engagement with their discipline (Kyriacou, Hultgren & Stephens, 1999: 380; Pop & Turner, 2009: 685). This is particularly the case with secondary teachers who have most commonly undertaken a first degree in a chosen subject (Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallat & McClune, 2001: 24). Extrinsic factors might include a desire for job security, a decent salary and a particular pattern of work over the year; indeed, Lortie noted that this last factor was particularly important for those with childcare responsibilities (1975: 32). Nearly 30 years later, Mahony, Hextall & Menter (2004) reported that little had changed, with men representing fewer than 30 per cent of classroom teachers (p. 133). Thus, pragmatically, teaching has always been seen as a 'good job for a woman'.

Lortie (1975) also argued that as teaching has been regarded as a form of vocation, certain motivations for becoming a teacher might be regarded as somewhat questionable and it is likely that this remains the case. As he comments, 'the traditions of teaching make people who seek money or prestige somewhat suspect' (Lortie, 1975: 102). One might, therefore, expect that more altruistic and/or intrinsic factors would dominate the reasons being given for becoming a teacher. Indeed, in their much later study, Manuel and Hughes (2006) found that most of their research participants, secondary education undergraduates, had based their decision on: a desire to help others and make a difference; a wish to maintain engagement with their subject; and a desire for personal fulfilment leading to an expectation of general job satisfaction. Job satisfaction itself is perhaps a self-evident but important factor in considering career choice. This factor was noted, for example, in Kyriacou & Coulthard's (2000) study where choosing 'a career I will find enjoyable' was rated most highly by a range of undergraduates, including those definitely considering teaching.

those definitely not considering teaching and others who were undecided (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000: 117; see also Kyriacou et al., 2002: 104).

In the major studies which have explored expressed reasons for choosing to teach, most respondents highlighted altruistic and intrinsic reasons (Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Kyriacou & Kunc, 1999; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Moran et al., 2001). Of course it should be noted, as above, that research respondents may be unlikely to cite overtly extrinsic factors as highly influential in their choice of teaching as a career, but typically, these sorts of factors do seem to be important in career decision-making more generally. For example, in Cockburn and Haydn's (2004) large-scale study of career choices undertaken with sixth-formers and final year undergraduates, high potential earnings was the most often cited factor, followed by a need for some intellectual challenge and stimulation as well as job security; the first and third factors fall clearly into the extrinsic category. However, it would not come as a surprise if those individuals choosing teaching as a career were to cite these extrinsic factors as less important. In many ways, this would match the occupational and professional discourses of public sector employment generally (Bottery, 2000).

Indeed, any study exploring reasons for choosing teaching as an occupation would need to explore the participants' views on material rewards. As Dolton suggests, there is a need to balance 'non-pecuniary considerations as well as the pecuniary rewards in making decisions' (Dolton, 1990: 92). Such considerations may well differ from individual to individual and rely, for example, on other factors such as whether s/he has had a career before deciding to teach, as well as the extent of her/his pre-existing financial and other responsibilities. In the English context, for example, it is worth noting that for some time now, national campaigns to recruit teachers have highlighted financial advantages such as starting salaries, as well as opportunities for promotion and other similar inducements.

Other studies which have explored reasons why individuals have chosen to become teachers have framed their decision categories differently, although in many ways these categories and variables map neatly onto the extrinsic, intrinsic, altruistic typology (Kyriacou et al., 2002). For example, Krečič & Grmek (2005) conducted a study

with undergraduates in Slovenia who had decided to become teachers. They grouped choice decisions under five headings: 'altruistic, material, self-realisation and alternative, and reasons arising from aspiration stereotype' (p. 265). They argued that while material factors, such as working conditions, fell easily into extrinsic motivation, examples of self-realisation, such as 'teaching is useful public work for the whole society' and 'I can be a good example to children and young people' (p. 271) could be viewed as aligned with more altruistic reasons. Their self-realisation category was in fact the most commonly cited set of reasons; however this category also included the importance of professional development and the opportunity to use talents or abilities, as had been found in the study undertaken by Cockburn & Haydn (2004); Malderez, Hobson, Tracey & Kerr (2007) also noted the importance of self-realisation for teachers, with one of two positions taken by those intending to become teachers as 'actualising an already identified potential', the other being 'a transformation of self in order to 'change into' a teacher' (p. 230). The potential, it is assumed, includes expected enjoyment of the activity of teaching and working with young people. Similarly, Huberman (1993), in his internationally-known work with secondary teachers in Switzerland, observed that, alongside material reasons, 'active motivations' (p. 113) such as 'contact with young people' (p. 115), were the most frequently cited factors in the decision to teach. He also found that teachers highlighted their interest in their subject discipline, noted in other studies (Barmby, 2006: 254; Kyriacou et al., 2003: 261).

This chapter has thus far briefly reviewed some of the dominant work in the field of research which explores why teachers decide to become teachers and it is argued that these reasons can be mapped onto a typology of motivations, described as being intrinsic, altruistic and/or extrinsic. The next section seeks to explore these categories in a little more depth. In addition, it is important to state that this typology is a heuristic device used in order to chart and map the range of reasons and factors that influence the decision to teach. These reasons do not stand in isolation in the social world and they are unlikely typically to exist as a 'one off' decision. As Hodkinson, Sparkes & Hodkinson (1996) observed, a significant dimension in career decision-making is 'progression over time' (p. 3). The reasons for becoming a teacher are likely to form a complex blend of these different types of factors and at any time some

reasons or motivations may be more or less important, depending on situational and biographical contextualising factors (ibid.: 148). They suggest that 'lifestyle choices' are made both 'with reasons expressed and discussed with others' and 'intuitively' and therefore decisions such as career choice 'are not conscious, discursive choices in the way in which choice is often understood in everyday language' (ibid.: 144).

## **2.2 Intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivations for teaching**

Firstly, perhaps unsurprisingly, intrinsic factors seem to be the most often cited in the literature on career-choice, and in particular choosing a career in teaching. Krečič and Grmek (2005) summarise the motives of 'future pedagogy workers [as] including the pursuit of happiness and a wish to work with children' (p. 266), although they categorise these reasons as relating to altruistic rather than intrinsic motivation. However, choice factors and the degree to which they are important may differ for individuals; those who have already decided on teaching may well either report having different priorities and/or they may view the extent to which teaching meets these priorities differently. As noted by Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000: 118):

it is the degree of match between what a person wants from a career and the extent to which they think a particular career offers what they want that has a critical influence on their career decision-making.

Again, unsurprisingly, in their study a greater number of those who had already decided on teaching considered intrinsic factors such as 'a job which gives me responsibility' (ibid.: 117) as being most important in shaping their decision to teach. However, even those individuals intending to teach may report variations in their desires and expectations for teaching; for example, some may primarily want a career working with children, as above, whereas others may be motivated to a greater degree by a desire to continue to work within their subject. Kyriacou et al. (2002) found that for those undergraduates intending to teach, working in their specialist subject was the fourth most important factor of twenty noted as influencing career choice. Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant (2003) found that engaging with their subject was



also 'a great 'pull' factor' (p. 106) for the career changers in their study who moved into teaching some years after graduating.

Secondly, altruistic factors may overlap considerably with some of the intrinsic values that are inherent in the job of teaching. For example, Pop and Turner (2009) found that 'the most powerful motivators for teaching are altruistic reasons' (p. 695). Indeed, one might perhaps predict that some desire to contribute to society would feature heavily in decision-making in relation to teaching as a career, as found, for example in Kyriacou and Benmansour's (1999) study of the motivation to teach foreign languages. Here they noted that undergraduates who had chosen teaching as a career were generally likely to cite altruistic reasons for their choice, such as a desire 'to play a useful social role in society' (p. 70).

On the other hand, altruistic factors do not appear to dominate in all of the published studies which explore teaching as a career choice. Hammond's (2002) study of a cohort of fifteen student teachers on a post-graduate certificate in education course (PGCE) in Information and Communicative Technology (ICT) canvassed the views of a small cohort of trainee teachers with a variety of backgrounds in the subject and a variety of prior experiences in work. He found that a desire to be of service was only mentioned twice as an influence in choosing teaching, although the 'buzz' of helping others achieve a goal was mentioned in relation to the most commonly cited reason for becoming a teacher. Trainees talked of the positive experiences of 'teacher-like' activities (Hammond, 2002: 137), which may subsume an implicit desire to help others. They may also relate more intrinsically to the activity itself, as in O'Sullivan, MacPhail & Tannehill's (2009) study of trainee Physical Education (PE) teachers and the influences of their experiences of coaching or similar activities (p. 182f). Hammond notes, for example, an earlier study of 122 secondary teachers conducted by Lyons (1981) which found that altruistic motives were significant but secondary to intrinsic factors (Hammond, 2002). There may, however, be some reasons why some respondents are more reluctant than others to cite altruistic factors explicitly in interview situations; they may well feel, for example, that emotional-supportive dimensions appear less robust in citing reasons for becoming a teacher. It may be more conventionally acceptable, however, to comment on this aspect of teaching in relation to career

expectations and outcomes, as was found in a study of student teachers in Norway and England conducted by Kyriacou, Kunc, Stephens & Hultgren (2003) where more than 50 per cent were certain that, once working as a qualified teacher, they would 'be doing a socially worthwhile job' (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 257). Overall, altruistic and intrinsic reasons for deciding to become a teacher are likely to stem from the individual's needs for job satisfaction and personal fulfilment, in line with what Richardson & Watt (2005), in their study of career changers, call 'career fit' (p. 480); that is, the match between an individual and their work environment.

Turning to the final category, extrinsic motivation, extrinsic rewards will inevitably be factors in any career choice but, as noted, the literature reports finding intrinsic and altruistic factors as more dominant in the choice of teaching as an occupation. As Lortie (1975) observed, there may be a belief that extrinsic factors are not appropriate influences to voice and they may, therefore, be more influential (and much less voiced) than studies have previously suggested (p. 30). However, Kyriacou & Coulthard's (2000) research exploring undergraduate career decision-making factors found that high earnings over the length of a career was in fact a relatively important factor across their sample. This was reported alongside findings where 39 per cent of the cohort desired 'a job where I will contribute to society' (p. 120). The percentage rating for those undergraduates citing the influence of earnings, however, decreased as the study moved from those definitely not interested in teaching to those already intending to teach. Nonetheless, almost half of those who were already 'pro-teaching' noted that earnings over one's career was an important factor in career-choice.

It seems, therefore, that while career earnings may well be important, they may also represent an element of job security as much as or more than an interest in a high salary *per se*. For example, job security is noted as important in other studies of career choice, a finding that may well be on the increase in a period of austerity and rising graduate unemployment. Cockburn and Haydn (2004) explored the views of 1,675 school leavers and 346 final year undergraduates on their career choice and found that 60 per cent of all respondents considered job security to be an important consideration; this is the same percentage as those reported as valuing job security in Kyriacou and Coulthard's (2000) group.

This section has discussed the three major forms of motivations to teach, based on psychological discourses and studies which have explored these specific factors in decisions leading to teaching as a career choice. What follows aims to deal more explicitly and in more detail with some of the reasons given for these decisions; in particular, the desire to work with young people; maintaining a link with the subject specialism; enjoying the classroom; positive teaching experiences and finally, the role of significant others in deciding to become a teacher.

### **2.3 Working with young people: making a difference**

Spear, Gould & Lee (2000) claim that the reasons PGCE students and other beginning teachers report for wanting to teach have remained remarkably consistent across different studies and different eras, with the most important factors being a desire for job satisfaction and to work with children (p.14). (Job satisfaction will come in many forms for different people and so will be set aside for the moment). It is no surprise, however, that working with young people is identified as an important factor in choosing to teach, being a central part of the job. However, it may be useful to explore whether this factor connects with other influences cited in the literature, such as serving a useful role in society, as this factor was noted 'as part of the broader social project of education' in Manuel & Hughes' study (2006: 10). Similarly, through helping young people to achieve in school, teachers may be fulfilling some of their own need to feel useful and assist young people in fulfilling their potential. This was a factor which Lortie (1975) found to be significant for some of the teachers in his cohort, one third of whom spoke of their 'pride' in the successes of their students (p.123), aligning with later studies commenting on the importance of 'perception of personal impact' (Eick, 2002: 354) in teacher retention. While this may not be an influential factor in arriving at the decision to teach, feeling useful and making a difference to young people might be related to some of the expectations of teaching as a career and may well have featured in prior experiences of teaching-like activities.

Many studies have reported the desire to have 'a role in society' as significant in career choice in general (Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999: 70). In the context of teaching, Manuel & Hughes (2006) found many of the education undergraduates in their study gave 'social justice' reasons for choosing a career in secondary age teaching, with comments such 'making a difference to children's lives' and 'helping others' (p. 11). Similarly, Kyriacou et al. (1999) found their student teachers frequently commented on wanting to contribute towards 'helping pupils to succeed, by developing their social skills and their self-confidence' (p. 379), and not only in relation to their academic progress. Pop & Turner (2009) also noted comments such as the 'ability to change lives' (p. 692) which were cited frequently as reasons for deciding to become a teacher and while 39 per cent of Kyriacou & Coulthard's (2000) undergraduates rated 'a job where I will contribute to society' as very important (p. 118), 90 per cent felt teaching would offer this type of intrinsic job satisfaction (ibid.). Although Krečič and Grmek (2005) categorised examples such as wanting to work with children as altruistic motivations for teaching (p. 272), they grouped comments such as doing 'useful public work for society' and being 'a good example to children and young people' (p. 271) under the theme of self-realisation. The excitement, for example, of 'influencing a whole generation, generations of people' (Younger, Brindley, Pedder & Hagger 2004: 249) may be more a desire to influence than a desire to improve society.

## **2.4 Maintaining engagement with the subject**

Younger et al. (2004) found that 88 per cent of their PGCE students regarded their subject as a significant factor in their choice of teaching as a career (p. 248). However, the importance of maintaining engagement with one's degree subject may take different forms, such as viewing the subject as intrinsically important and therefore wishing to share that knowledge with others, as opposed to, or in combination with, wishing to maintain one's own development within the discipline. Hammond's (2002) study of ICT teachers found that both these subject-related factors played a part in his participants' reasons for choosing to teach in secondary schools but he also found a third factor which related to the 'special features' of the subject (p. 137); the variety within the subject as well as its importance in the modern world.

While 'a desire to share one's knowledge' (Huberman, 1993: 113) may not be recognised as unambiguously altruistic, there may be elements of altruism in this reason for wanting to teach, where the individual also believes that this knowledge will be of benefit to others. It may be, for example, that the 'satisfaction of helping others understand' is inseparable from the 'pleasure of teaching' (ibid.: 116). Conversely, it may be that sharing knowledge is more closely linked with an interest in one's subject, as was the case for some of the PGCE students in Younger et al.'s study (2004). Indeed Huberman (1993) found that helping others as well as pleasure in teaching were often linked (p. 115); O'Sullivan et al. (2009) also reported that their sample of trainee PE teachers contextualised their 'service to society in terms of wanting to give back to young people and pass on their knowledge' (p. 188).

In some of the subject-centred studies on reasons for choosing to become a teacher, there are other intersecting variables that impact the decision to teach. One of these factors is gender. For example, Huberman (1993), in his chapter with Grounauer, noted a presence of men teaching 'academic streams' who were drawn to teaching because of their degree subject and who intended to teach in the short-term before looking for 'something else'. This something else remains vague' (p. 109). On the other hand, they noted that more women cited their 'love of the subject' as a reason for teaching as a career (Huberman, 1993: 123). Reid & Caudwell (1997) also found engagement with their degree subject as an important attractor for teachers but as a more significant attractor for Arts graduates than for Maths/Science graduates (40 per cent compared with 17 per cent) (p. 50). Although, overall, Reid & Caudwell found very little difference in the influences on the PGCE students in their study in relation to gender, it may be that subject difference might be linked with gender, with some subjects perceived as feminine/masculine and therefore generally more popular with one gender or the other (Francis, Hutchings, Archer & Melling, 2003: 430).

A difference in subjects may not be surprising as there may be a greater range of careers in which one might continue to work with Mathematics/Science than with an Arts subject. It may be that views on subject choice and subject utility in the labour market develop early in life. Some of the research on subject choice at school notes a

'naïvety' in relation to the perceived usefulness of certain subjects, best summed up as follows: 'there is no point in doing art unless you are going to be an artist' (Stables & Wikeley, 1997, cited in Adey & Biddulph, 2001: 442). Perhaps an interest in a subject that leads to it being studied at university, even if there is no clear labour market pathway, might mean that these subject graduates may be inevitably drawn, to a certain extent, to teaching as a potential career (for example, Religious Education; Theology; Classics). It is interesting to note, however, that, according to Coulthard & Kyriacou (2002), graduates of non-national curriculum subjects are marginally less likely to consider teaching as a career (p. 44). Nonetheless, a passion for the studied subject may lie at the heart of a desire to share knowledge of that subject with others and a desire to continue one's engagement with the discipline. Huberman (1993) observes that this appears to be the case for most secondary school subject teachers (p. 115). For example, O'Sullivan et al. (2009) note the obvious 'passion about physical activity' which framed their PE undergraduates' commitment to teaching (p. 187). In addition, unless a professional sports career is viable, there may be fewer explicit pathways in which to develop and sustain a sports-related career, other than teaching, than may be the case for science graduates.

## **2.5 Enjoying the activity of teaching**

Expectations and experiences of teaching also play a part in shaping individual attractions to the job. Kyriacou et al. (1999) explored the motivations of 105 student teachers in Norway and 112 secondary PGCE students in England. Concentrating on the English cohort for the purposes of this study, the team observed that many of the PGCE students, at York University, were very positive about the activity of classroom teaching as an attractor at the start of their course. Five weeks later, they interviewed twelve of the students in depth, and discovered that their views were now less positive. They argued that this shift in perceptions of classroom activity was likely to have occurred because the students had, by that time, been spending two days a week in school and their 'more realistic view of classroom teaching ... may have toned down their expectation of enjoying classroom teaching' (p. 379). Nonetheless, it is logical that those attracted to teaching may be influenced by an assumption that they will

enjoy the activity itself. Indeed, Huberman (1993: 116) found that his respondents highlighted the 'pleasure of teaching' as an attractor. He argued that this was a complex influence and many of those participants who cited this factor linked it to their 'desire to impart knowledge', their 'need to explain' their subject or the 'satisfaction of helping someone understand' (ibid.).

Several other studies comment on the influence of previous experiences of teaching activities or teacher-like activities in making the decision to become a teacher. Hammond (2002), for example, found that ICT trainee teachers in his study often 'drew on their own past experience of teaching, mentoring or helping a learner when reaching a decision to train to teach' (p. 135). This was a frequently mentioned influence on their decision to teach and the activities cited included those in their previous job, tutoring experiences such as giving piano lessons, voluntary work or caring for younger siblings (p. 137). While it is understandable that having enjoyed this type of activity might contribute to an expectation of future enjoyment in classroom teaching, the degree to which these experiences are key influences is likely to vary. O'Sullivan et al. (2009), for example, found that many of the 75 PE teaching undergraduates in their study cited similar types of experiences as a key influence in their decision to teach. Perhaps such experiences, however, might be more evident for those engaging successfully in sport and PE, where opportunities for coaching will be more common, where trainees are likely to have had experiences of working in summer camps or of coaching younger people at their sports clubs (p. 182). In the case of PE, as already discussed, the choice to teach may simultaneously relate to a desire to maintain engagement with the subject and to the desire to work with children. However, a sense of achievement and enjoyment in teacher-like activities is likely to contribute to positive expectations in relation to teaching.

## **2.6 The role of significant others**

Another factor in coming to choose teaching as an occupation relates to the influence of other significant people. As noted in O'Sullivan et al.'s study (2009) exploring the views of PE teacher undergraduates, 'significant others' were influential in three ways:

developing their interest in physical activity and/or teaching, developing their sense of identity as a potential teacher, or inspiring them as role models that teaching was something they would enjoy and could do well if they chose this career pathway

(O'Sullivan et al., 2009: 183).

Manuel & Hughes (2006) found that many of their respondents were strongly influenced by a teacher they had met, with more than 73 per cent of their 79-strong cohort of pre-service secondary school teachers reporting the influence of a 'significant teacher or mentor' (p. 20). Several of Hammond's (2002) respondents also noted the 'example or encouragement of others' as influential in their decisions, for example coming from 'a teaching family' or others having told them that they would make good teachers (p. 137).

These findings can be usefully distilled to encapsulate two main strands: those who have encouraged potential teachers and/or suggested they would be good teachers and those who have done so less explicitly by acting as teaching role models, which will be discussed separately below. However, before coming to this, it should be stated that the role of significant others might be a predictable element in motivating career choice, but one that may more properly relate to situational and biographical contextualising factors. These sorts of factors may in turn be much harder to categorise as being forms of intrinsic, altruistic or extrinsic motivators; they are, however, influential components in choosing to teach. Thus, the influence of family, teachers and significant others will be explored in a little more detail.

Teaching role models may come in the form of family members or close significant others in the teaching profession or through the role models provided by one's teachers at school. Huberman (1993) found a significant minority, 27 of his 156 respondents, identified with teachers in their family and teaching appeared to have been a somewhat inevitable path for them (p. 117). Lortie's (1975) study also reported that 6.4 per cent of his respondents cited 'a tradition in my family' as the main influence on their decision to enter teaching, with 6 per cent noting 'an example set by a favourite teacher' (p. 41). Conversely, Spear et al. (2000) found in their UK study,



focusing on England and Wales, that those entering teaching were less likely to have parents who were teachers (p. 12) and it may be that the situation has changed in this respect since the end of the twentieth century. In addition, Unwin (1990) found that having a parent who taught made little impact on their offspring's decision to teach (or not) (p. 233), indicating the complexity of interpreting influences on career decision-making related to teaching.

Others may have been influenced positively towards a career in teaching by their former teachers (Goodson, 1991: 40). Again, Huberman (1993) found this to be the case with many of his teachers. Those with positive memories of teachers are likely to have enjoyed school and may therefore also be influenced, in citing former teachers as a motivating factor, by the general school environment. Sixteen teachers in Huberman's sample commented on feeling 'nurtured' at school (Huberman, 1993: 118) and therefore chose a career in that environment: 'I liked school and felt comfortable there so I stayed' (ibid.). Lortie's (1975) earlier research also found that those 'favourably disposed to the existing system' (p. 54) were more likely to choose a career within it, with many of his respondents recalling outstanding teachers from their time at school (p. 63). Lortie (1975) also commented on the importance of family encouragement, whether generally or specifically through having teachers in the family, as a 'powerful recruitment resource' (p. 44). Specifically, he gives examples of his respondents being asked to explain things in class and being told, in one case, 'I was a born teacher' (p. 44). More generally, he suggests that those, for example, with younger siblings might feel themselves labelled, even if not consciously, as 'teachers' (p. 46). Similarly, Osguthorpe & Sanger (2013) noted 40 per cent of their trainee teachers as citing the influence of a particular teacher or family member as influential in the decision to teach (p. 183). While positive experiences of teachers and significant others have been commonly noted, it should be mentioned that, although less common in the literature, others have noted counter-identifiers; Malderez et al.'s (2007) survey of teachers, for example, found that 57 per cent reported 'wanting to teach pupils better than in my own experience' as a motivating factor in their decision to train as a teacher (p. 233).

It may also be the case that teachers within the family might act, explicitly or implicitly, as models for discouragement. More than one fifth of the sixth-formers surveyed by Cockburn & Haydn (2004) noted having been deterred by relatives from choosing teaching as a career (p. 44). Younger et al. (2004) also noted active discouragement by family, friends and teachers as an aspect mentioned by 80 per cent of their PGCE students (p. 249); their study indicated that those students 'frequently appear to draw on a strongly moralistic positioning in order to withstand this discouragement' (p. 258), although this aspect has not been widely noted in the earlier literature. Of course it may be the case that respondents are unwilling to ascribe an important decision, such as career choice, to the influence of others, whether positive or negative. For example, although one-third of Hammond's (2002) sample commented on the influence of friends, parents or colleagues, they noted this, for the most part, as a 'marginal' influence (p. 139) in their decision to become a teacher.

## **2.7 Pragmatics and extrinsic motivations for choosing to teach**

The next section will now turn more directly to some of the more practical, pragmatic and extrinsic reasons which influence the decision to choose to work as a school teacher. This section will critically examine the issue of financial rewards, career security, and the working life of the school teacher. It will begin by considering the influence of salary and financial rewards as contributing towards the decision to teach.

Some time ago, Dolton (1990) noted that factors such as pecuniary rewards were important in the decision to enter teaching, although this finding has not been borne out in many of the later studies into reasons for choosing to teach. However, the connection between salary and teaching has had a complex and shifting relationship in the UK. On the one hand, while teaching, alongside other caring professions in the public sector such as nursing, has been positioned as a 'vocation', it has therefore seemed somewhat unprincipled, if not 'vulgar and crass' to express concerns about salary levels (Mahony, Menter & Hextall, 2004: 444). In contrast, at times when the labour market has been strong, these caring public sector positions have experienced some major recruitment and, in particular, retention difficulties (Menter et al., 2002).

Overall, however, it is highly unlikely that anyone chooses teaching for its financial rewards. Indeed, Kyriacou et al. (2002) found that starting salary was the least influential of twenty factors ranked by first year undergraduates as important in their career choice (p. 108). However, when the same study asked what, in theory, might assist in attracting someone to teaching, the second highest measure, after improved resources and conditions, was a 'higher starting salary' (Kyriacou et al., 2002: 113). While Hammond's (2002) ICT trainee teachers reported that the (then) £6000 bursary, followed by the (then) £4000 'golden hello' after their first year of teaching, was not significant enough to be influential in attracting people to teaching, five of the fifteen student teachers stated that they could not have undertaken the course without this money. Until 2010/11, PGCE students in England received a £6000 training bursary (from 2012 the bursary depends on the subject specialism and degree class), which Kyriacou et al. (2002) suggest may be a factor in some student teachers choosing to 'give teaching a try' even when they held less positive expectations of the job. Understandably, if expectations of a career are not substantially borne out once working in it, this might lead to some leaving the profession (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 262). However, as bursaries and other inducements into teaching come and go with different climates and governments, salary considerations may be a more stable point for discussion in terms of decisions to enter teaching. One further point; in spite of a seeming lack of emphasis on the importance of financial rewards, those who were entering teaching were also more likely to agree that teachers were underpaid (See, 2004: 221).

As already detailed, in Hammond's study, 'salary and material rewards were not the main motivation' for becoming a teacher (Hammond, 2002: 140); indeed eight of the ICT trainees stated that their earnings over time would be comparable with other careers, while six, on the other hand, reported that, in their view, their earnings would be significantly lower than might have been the case in other careers. Supporting the relative significance of earnings over time in career choice generally, Kyriacou & Coulthard (2000) noted that the potential for high earnings over the length of one's career was 'fairly important', ranking eighth of twenty factors influencing the undergraduates in their study (p.120). However, they also found that the relative importance of this factor (high earnings over time) changed significantly when they

compared their 'anti-teaching' group with their 'pro-teaching group'; 75 per cent of the former rated this factor as important, compared with 45 per cent of the latter group (p. 120).

While salary itself may not be a significant attractor, other material factors may be influential in the decision to train to teach. Kyriacou & Coulthard's (2000) undergraduates compared factors which were important to them with the extent to which they thought teaching offered those factors. The study found that 60 per cent were looking for 'a secure job' and 43 per cent believed that teaching would offer that security, the fourth most frequent factor assumed in teaching (p. 120). Perhaps related to security is the potential for promotion; several of Hammond's (2002) trainees were attracted by the career structure of teaching and the sixth most important factor in Kyriacou & Coulthard's (2000) study of factors influencing the decision to teach was 'good promotion prospects' (p. 120). While promotion prospects may not be among the most important initial influences in choosing a career in teaching, they may nonetheless be important secondary factors. Kyriacou et al. (2003) found that 73 per cent of their PGCE students hoped to attain a management role within a few years of qualifying (p. 259). This finding may be viewed as somewhat predictable given the government publicity which celebrates rapid promotion possibilities in teaching. However, rapid promotion prospects may be particularly important for career changers, for example, and for those with heavier financial responsibilities. In relation to career changers, Richardson & Watt (2005) note that while the salary may not be a dominant attractor, its reliability may be especially significant for this category of student teacher who may have wider financial responsibilities (p. 476).

As already noted, extrinsic motivators such as the (alleged) long holidays are not commonly mentioned by pre- and in-service teachers, although they appear to be commonly listed in terms of being hypothetical attractors or by those not necessarily going into teaching (Spear et al., 2000: 13). On the other hand, the general working pattern of the school year is mentioned more often. As noted above, Reid & Caudwell (1997) commented on the lack of variance in attractors to teaching when results were analysed by age, gender and subject of first degree, with an exception being the match of 'working pattern' with parenthood; 12 per cent of females in their secondary PGCE

sample noted this time pattern as important, compared with 7 per cent of males (p. 49). Similarly, another study, exploring the motivation of undergraduates and postgraduates already training to be teachers, found that extrinsic factors such as 'financial security, shorter hours and longer holidays, were important attractors (Moran et al., 2001: 25), and they noted the last two as more likely given the high proportion of females in their study, who may have been considering the demands of parenthood. However, Reid & Caudwell (1997) also reported that men in their study were marginally more likely to mention school holidays as an influence in their decision-making. Those of Lortie's (1975) respondents who mentioned the working pattern of teaching related it to 'other commitments'; these comments were mainly made by women referring to their family roles (p. 32). Where men mentioned this factor it was more often in the context of allowing time for other activities such as studying. It must be noted, however, that Lortie's study took place some decades ago, when, for example, it might have been less common for a wife/mother not to be at home at the end of the school day.

It might also be the case that mature career entrants, who may be closer to thinking about parenthood/already parenting, would comment on these more extrinsic of factors, as Kyriacou & Kunc (2007) surmised when noting the differences between their Norwegian university student teachers and the English university PGCE students. The former group comprised more students over the age of 30 and they referred to working patterns and school holidays as important factors in choosing to become teachers, far more frequently than their (younger) English sample.

One aspect which needs further consideration, in this arena of extrinsic motivations for becoming a teacher, rests on the values-conflict which characterises this set of factors. If it is generally regarded as 'crass' or unprofessional to choose to enter a public service (health, education, caring professions) for financial gain, then it is perhaps unlikely that respondents in studies which seek to explore students' dominant reasons for this choice will elicit these more 'practical' reasons; the values discourse of 'making a difference' and 'concern for professional values of integrity and altruism' are likely to dominate, as perhaps they should. Thus, even in interview settings, and certainly in completing ratings schedules, those considering teaching or beginning their pre-

service training will 'know' what sorts of values need to be prioritised. One way in which some studies have 'got over' this methodological difficulty is to enquire about why others might be encouraged or attracted to teaching. Kyriacou et al. (2002) found that a good starting salary was seen, at least hypothetically, as likely to encourage more applicants. Lortie (1975) found that only 6 per cent of his respondents noted any material benefits as attractors for teaching but when they discussed why their colleagues might be attracted to teaching, 37 per cent mentioned money and 34 per cent mentioned job security (p.31). Similarly, working pattern, or 'time compatibility' was more often mentioned in commenting on colleagues' potential influences, with 44 per cent of respondents mentioning time/life issues in this context, although they were 'sensitive' about these factors in relation to their own influences and attractions to teaching (ibid.). As Lortie indicated, these findings do suggest an awareness of practical and extrinsic factors as potential attractors (ibid.). Nonetheless, while choosing to teach is shaped by practical factors, as have been outlined in this section, they are also driven by another set of influences, factors which are situated and contextual.

## **2.8 Situated and contextual factors in choosing to teach**

This section will now consider some of the situated attributes such as background, gender and other aspects of biography as well as the wider political-policy context that all play a part in choosing to become a teacher. In any study attempting to explore the reasons for a set behaviour, such as choosing to become a teacher, there are some inescapable methodological dilemmas. One of these is that in seeking out motivations to explain actions, there may be a tendency for some form of post-hoc rationalisation (See, 2004: 220) where the individual reflects on a choice perhaps taken some time ago, for reasons which, perhaps, can hardly be called to mind. Thus, the participant constructs a response from their memories, perceptions and, potentially, from what they think will be acceptable to the interviewer. Secondly, it is highly unlikely that decision-making is a 'one-off' activity and neither is it likely to be a rational and logistical accomplishment drawn up in consequence of different sets of motivators and pressures to act (Ball, Maguire & Macrae, 2000: 22), however powerful some of these

may appear to be. 'Choices' and 'decisions' are arrived at, sometimes, to paraphrase Marx, in circumstances not always of the individual's choosing. Thus this section explores some of the wider complexity and contextualisation which surrounds 'choosing' to teach; the lives of individuals are:

bounded and influenced by real, but changing, social structures (positions, distributions, relationships and accesses) and patterned by socialized frames of perception and thought

(Ballet al., 2000: 22).

For example, one of the studies prompted by issues of teacher supply and retention explored some of the aspects of biography and demographics which patterned the 'determinants' of those coming into teaching (See, 2004). As with other studies, See found that socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds were influential in career choice (See, 2004: 213); he found that parental occupation and level of education, gender, ethnicity and type of school attended seemed to be correlational factors in shaping who would be, or would not be, more likely to consider teaching as a career. He also found that those whose mothers had an A-level or equivalent qualification or higher were less likely to enter teaching (See, 2004, p. 217) and this might be seen as generally aligning, to some degree, with social class. This is in line with findings reported by Dolton (1990):

the probability of becoming a teacher in a first job is lower if one: comes from the ethnic minorities, has a higher class of degree, and has parents of a higher social class ... or if one has done a PhD

(Dolton, 1990: 100).

Dolton's study found that the higher the individual's educational attainment, the lower the likelihood of them becoming a teacher. In his later study, See (2004: 217) also noted that those with, or likely to attain, 2.2 degrees were more likely to enter teaching than those with a 2.1 degree classification or higher (see also Hoyle, 2001: 141). However, this may not necessarily apply in the same way to Classics teaching since the ratio of applicants to PGCE places is high, rendering it relatively competitive, and most candidates are generally highly qualified academically. Dolton also added a caveat that

his findings may well have differed between the phases of schooling (primary and secondary) as well as between males, females and subjects (Dolton, 1990: 103). To this we might also want to add that the realities of the labour market at any moment in time may also play a significant part in influencing which occupations become more or less 'popular' at specific times.

As has been signalled earlier in this chapter, teaching has often been seen as a more 'feminine' career, largely because of its predisposition towards 'caring' (Acker, 1994; Goodson, 2008) and indeed, is often described as a feminised division of labour. However, in his study, Lortie (1975) found no significant difference between the genders in relation to how they spoke about the 'care of young people' aspect of teaching in what he termed 'attractors' to teaching (p. 26). Nonetheless, there may be other types of gender-based issues related to occupational status. For instance, Richardson & Watt (2005), in Australia, conducted their study into reasons for choosing to teach at a particularly 'acute' time; they report:

the feminisation of teaching as a career in Australia has coincided with a public perception that teaching is low in status, not well paid and is essentially work more suited to women

(Richardson & Watt, 2005: 476).

In the literature on occupational status, there is a well established link between feminisation and reduced status in many occupational settings (Stewart, Prandy & Blackburn, 1980; Witz, 1990). Teaching is often perceived as a relatively low status career, or a 'semi-profession' (Hoyle, 2001: 140; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003: 583). In See's study, only 35 per cent of the students reported that they perceived teaching as high status; however, those not entering teaching were more likely to rate status as important in choosing a possible career (See, 2004: 221). Thus, factors of gender and occupational status may also be interwoven into the processes involved in choosing to teach.

Studies such as that of Younger et al. (2004) commented on the importance of individuals' own experiences of school in their impact on the type of teacher they wish to be (p.249; also Jenkins, 1998: 875), although they did not relate them specifically to



the motivation to teach. Similarly, in his examination of pre-service and early career teacher biographies in the North American context, Knowles (1992) argued that pre-service teachers' approaches to teaching were 'partially shaped by their prior experiences' (p. 99). While his research interest lay with how prior experiences subsequently influenced classroom approaches, it seems reasonable to assume that early experiences may well play some part in leading individuals to the classroom in the first place. For example, Eick's (2002) study of North American Science teachers' personal histories, found that 'Teachers' reflections on the beliefs and values that motivate present action resonate with prior beliefs and values from past personal histories' (p.355) and noted the importance of history/biography in shaping the individual in her/his future career. The undergraduate students in this study often referred to previous life experiences as a factor in their work (ibid.).

In the UK there is also a trajectory of research which has explored the life histories and biographies of teachers (for an overview, see Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2007). As Goodson (2008: 11) observes:

Life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the person that we are, of our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our 'self' in our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice.

Thus, aspects of background, such as members of the family with teaching experience, and aspects of life history, such as success and pleasure in a subject discipline, are all likely to contribute towards choosing to become a teacher. There are, however, other biographically-related aspects which are also highlighted in the literature which influence the decision to become a teacher. For example, See (2004) found, as might be expected and alongside findings mentioned earlier, that those entering teaching generally had a positive experience of school (See, 2004: 221). Goodson also noted the part played by teachers' experience of school when they were pupils and he claimed that for many teachers these early experiences were 'seen not only as important as the training periods but in many cases more important' (Goodson, 1992: 14) in their professional socialisation. In addition, as Lortie (1975: 65) and Knowles (1992: 101) pointed out, teaching is unusual in that future teachers are already familiar with the setting of their work: the classroom.

This short section has drawn attention to the influence of factors which complement the earlier work in this chapter which explored the role of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivators for deciding to become a teacher. In short, factors related to the wider context, including biography, the specificity of time/place and labour market issues, all play a part in shaping, influencing and directing the choice to become a teacher. While there is not the space here to do justice to the complexities involved, such as intersectional attributes of class, gender, 'race'/ethnicity, age, as well as the distinctions which pattern choosing to teach in different phases or sectors, these situated and contextual factors need also to be foregrounded in any consideration of why individuals choose to become teachers.

## **2.9 Towards a conclusion: towards my research**

Kyriacou & Benmansour (1999) have summarised the most commonly given reasons in studies of the choice of teaching as 'the desire to work with children, the desire to help children succeed, and the desire to contribute to society' with reasons such as 'personal and academic development, the variety and autonomy involved in the job and...length of working day and holidays' as common but less frequently given reasons (Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999: 69). This chapter, drawing on some of the well known and classic work in the area (Lortie, 1975; Huberman, 1993; Goodson, 2001; as well as the work by Kyriacou and various colleagues) has 'borrowed' the typology of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivators in order to detail some of the dominant drivers for becoming a teacher. It has also argued that situated and contextual factors, of history, biography and contemporary policy and politics, all play a part in this decision making process. Thus, in spite of the commonalities across a range of studies, the influences on teaching as a career choice are undoubtedly many, varied and complex. As Jenkins (1998) observes from his study of Science and History teachers, 'While [teaching as a *vocation*] may be true of a small number of teachers, for the majority, teaching is a job which they have taken up initially for a variety of reasons, many of which are highly contingent and unpredictable' (p. 879).

This literature review began by stating that as yet, there are no studies which systematically and specifically consider the experiences, views and choices of occupation that have been made by teachers of Classics. Although there has been a brief exploration of some of the work which deals specifically with some subject-based teachers, PE and Science teachers in particular, in this first chapter the focus has been generalised to *all* teachers. However, teachers of Classics may be unique in certain respects. Firstly, they have all chosen to teach a subject which is not part of the national curriculum; secondly, it is likely that they will have attended 'old' universities and will have gained 'good' degrees. Thirdly, if they were to seek employment in the independent sector, it is likely that several of them would be employed without necessarily having undertaken a PGCE. Thus, in the empirical work that lies at the centre of this thesis, the intention is to concentrate on this under-researched 'invisible' cohort of people who have chosen to become teachers and ask, why, specifically, they have decided to teach. The next chapter details the methodology, methods and research tools which were deployed to this end.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this thesis is to consider the reasons that students on a Classics PGCE course have decided to become Classics teachers. The chapter presents the ontological and epistemological viewpoint of the study, setting out the rationale for the qualitative interpretative paradigm selected. It explains the methods adopted to explore the reasons given by a cohort of student teachers on a Classics PGCE course for selecting Classics teaching as a career. It suggests a hermeneutical, qualitative approach as most suited to the exploration of decision-making with this relatively small number of trainee teachers. The chapter then outlines the rationale for the use of interviews, as well as a written task undertaken by the students at the beginning of their course. It sets out the methods of analysis of both sets of data, and considers the potential strengths and limitations of the approach. In addition, the chapter outlines the ethical considerations undertaken to ensure the proper conduct of the study for the participants.

To reiterate, the study considers the following research questions:

1. What are the factors influencing the decisions of a cohort of Classics graduates to train to teach?
2. To what extent is the decision to teach a decision to teach *Classics* specifically?
3. To what extent do differences in educational path and background relate to influences on the decision to teach?
4. How do the perceptions of a cohort of pre-service Classics teachers develop over their training and into their first year of teaching?

Several studies relating to teaching as a career choice have been discussed in the previous chapter. Of these, many were large-scale quantitative studies, using, for example, (largely) closed questionnaires or rating scales (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Cockburn & Haydn, 2004; Krečič & Grmek, 2005); some elicited more qualitative data, with open questionnaire items or mixing questionnaires with follow-up interviews (Kyriacou et al., 1999; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Manuel & Hughes, 2006); others

considered smaller samples of teachers or trainee teachers, employing interviews in qualitative studies (Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Younger et al., 2004; Raggl & Troman, 2008). In O'Sullivan et al.'s (2009) study, 75 trainee PE teachers wrote a narrative piece outlining the influences which had led them to choose a career in teaching. None of these studies appeared to present a 'one size fits all' approach although perhaps the closest in terms of the position of the researcher and the size and type of sample appeared to be the research by Hammond (2002); in it he explored the views of a cohort of fifteen trainee teachers, his own tutees on a PGCE course in ICT, on their motivations for choosing teaching. Nonetheless, it is important to consider one's own ontological and, leading from it, epistemological perspective in deciding upon the methodological approach for a research project.

### **3.1 A paradigmatic approach**

This study does not consider the truth as 'out there' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 7) in the sense that, as already discussed, it is likely that a variety of influences will be involved in career decision-making; their impact will be embedded within a complex network of interactions between, and individuals' interpretation of, these factors. Thus a study of career decision-making can only explore the influences as presented by the participants at particular points and as they choose to interpret them. A positivist approach was therefore deemed unsuitable for this type of study, originating as it does in the study of the scientific world. It assumes that there are observable external reasons why individuals act in particular ways. However, choice-making in a social science context will be quite different from a scientific reaction. The present study is unlikely to provide a pattern of logical links and would therefore not lend itself to primarily quantitative methods, being largely concerned with experiences and interpretations. A more 'naturalistic' approach seems appropriate, assuming that:

The social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated and that their model of a person is an autonomous one, not the plastic version favoured by positivist researchers

(Cohen et al, 2007: 19).

If the ontological perspective is that the truth is not 'out there', and that 'for any given instance, more than one reality – truth – exists' (Morehouse, 2012: 23), then it is probable that an objectivist epistemology will not be appropriate. Given that the topic of career choice involves intricacies of individuals' previous experiences, the approach to such personal decision-making is likely to take account of a more constructivist epistemology. The influence of circumstances, whether social, cultural or economic, cannot be ignored and since the student teachers' influences will be interpreted retrospectively, they will also be subject to the many experiences undergone in their lives, the interactions with others and the interpretations of all of these. Thus the hermeneutical/dialectical nature of constructivism may suit this type of study, allowing for logical argument to build but also the hermeneutics allowing for the inclusion of 'created findings'. Since there are various sub-paradigms stemming from constructivism and since this hermeneutical element seems to fit an exploratory study, it is worth investigating these in more detail. These sub-paradigms will be discussed below.

Naturalistic, interpretative approaches developed as a reaction to positivism, asserting the difference, as noted above, between the social and the natural world (Schwandt, 2000: 191). While interpretivism explores the individual's 'subjective world of human experience' (Cohen et al., 2007: 21), more positivistic approaches would seek to establish rules of behaviour. As Schwandt explains, however, the meanings of social action require interpretation (Schwandt, 2000: 191). He outlines the 'interpretivist tradition' (Schwandt, 2000: 191.) as composed of three elements. Firstly, an interpretative approach seeks to 'get[ting] inside the head of an actor' (ibid.: 192), known as empathetic identification. An exploratory study such as this is likely to include this aspect of an interpretative approach and to attempt to gain understanding through 'looking over the shoulders of actors and trying to figure out (both by observing and conversing) what the actors think they are up to' (Schwandt, 2000: 192). Since it is clearly impossible to get inside the heads of the student teachers in considering their influences on choosing to teach, the study will attempt an 'over the shoulder' approach. Secondly, Schwandt identifies a phenomenological sociology approach, in exploring how individuals understand their own actions as well as those of others. This approach includes 'indexicality and reflexivity' (Potter, 1996), with the

former stressing the importance of context in interpreting meaning and the latter the importance of utterances as actions as well as containing meaning (Schwandt, 2000: 192). Thirdly, he borrows the term 'language games' from Wittgenstein, referring to cultural 'rules', which are understood within particular cultures and the interpretivist researcher aims to understand those rules (ibid.: 192f).

Schwandt thus summarises approaches in the interpretivist tradition as having in common that:

- (a) they view human action as meaningful;
- (b) they evince an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and fidelity to the life world; and
- (c) from an epistemological point of view they share the neo-Kantian desire to emphasize the contribution of human subjectivity (i.e. intention) to knowledge without thereby sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge.

In other words, interpretivists argue that it is possible to understand the subjective meaning of action (grasping the actor's beliefs, desires and so on) yet to do so in an objective manner.

(Schwandt, 2000: 193).

These three, as already noted, could be said to describe the interpretivist tradition generally noted as hermeneutic. Schwandt does note a fourth, philosophical hermeneutics (ibid.: 194), which is concerned with the process of understanding and views meaning 'not necessarily as constructed (i.e. created, assembled) but as negotiated (i.e. a matter of coming to terms)' (ibid.: 195).

There appears to be a great deal of overlap between philosophical hermeneutics and social constructivism, an approach that assumes a relativist ontology. The next section explores social constructivism further, as the approach appears to offer potential for the aims and purposes of the current study, where 'individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences...meanings [which] are varied and multiple' (Cresswell, 2007: 20). Social constructivism proposes that there is no one reality but individual realities which are 'formed through interaction with others' (ibid.: 21) and in this

approach a researcher would endeavour to render these accurately for each individual at that point in time, an aim for this study of the choice of Classics teaching as a career. An interesting element of this is the *cultural/historical* level of analysis, where cultural practices play a role in development over time, and the *ontogenetic* level where an individual's physical make-up and history play their part (Sullivan Palincsar, 2005: 292f). The approach also recognises the researcher's own 'experiences and background' (Cresswell, 2007: 21). As such, it will be important to bear in mind my own biographical experiences on the interpretation, analysis and presentation of the research (Sikes & Potts, 2008: 5). As well the researcher's biography, which will be discussed in chapter 5, it is important to consider my position as an 'insider' researcher working within the institution from which the participants are drawn (ibid.: 3).

A Vygotskian (1978) approach to the nature of knowledge would presume intellectual conceptual development through the mediation of language (oral, written or internalised) and the 'social situation of development' (Moll, 2001: 14). This study considers the expressed influences on students' choice of a particular career path and the word 'influence' must imply some kind of interaction acting upon the individual and leading to an internalisation of ideas. The selection of a particular career path becomes a conscious decision, indeed a necessary decision for those particular students. On the other hand, the decision must have been mediated and it may be that there are 'obvious' reasons for such choices; but behind them are likely to lie various mediations which may or may not have been consciously internalised. It will only be possible to discover, through interaction and interpretation what the students *identify* as influences on their choice and some of those influences may only arrive at the conscious level through the process of interviewing and the relating of these interviews to a limited set of written information.

In examining career choice, this study explores the way participants have constructed their behaviour, rather than seeing them as possessing a 'truth' about choice of career. The relativist ontological assumptions, therefore, include reality as both individual and social, that is, there are multiple constructed realities, but subjective to each individual. In interviewing as an approach, the study will be able to use the words of the participants as evidence for those realities. Whilst it is not possible to be inside the



mind of the participant, the study, as noted, draws upon the 'over the shoulder' approach. In taking this approach, I will have to acknowledge my inevitable subjectivity while attempting to reduce the impact of it and to attempt to 'make the familiar strange' and 'the strange familiar' (Sikes & Potts, 2008: 7). In this interpretivist approach, the researcher needs to 'begin with the individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them' (Cohen et al., 2007: 22) and for this reason, the study seems suited to the use of interview, which allows the participants' realities to emerge during the study.

Such an exploration should produce information on what the students identify as true for them at a particular point in time but will have to recognise that even that is only 'true' at the time of interviewing, that is, as each participant interacts with the research project. Even then, it will only indicate the 'truth' they allow (whether consciously or not) to be heard. Interactions occur everyday which could, and presumably do, lead to meanings being reconstructed, depending on the context. As already noted, context is of prime importance. As a researcher, it is necessary to start from an open-minded perspective. While it is probably impossible to begin some research without considering the type of knowledge which might be produced, there is no assumption here that 'the truth is out there'. Since the aim is for the findings to emerge from the data, there is an element of grounded theory in this interpretivist approach. However in true grounded theory (for example, Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2000) theories are generated empirically from the data, and constantly checked, with the research ending when the evidence reaches the point of 'theoretical saturation'. Perhaps there is also an appropriate element in that Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest it is rather confined to the specific phenomenon and comprehensible to those in the area, perhaps not as generalisable as strict scientific experimentation.

In summary, this study adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach which touches on what is termed a 'constructivist paradigm', which emerged from Lincoln & Guba's redefinition of naturalism (Donmoyer, 2001: 178). Donmoyer, generally working within the field of modern foreign language research, advocates a middle-ground approach between seeing paradigms as complementary and seeing them as

contradictory (Donmoyer, 2001: 190); as Howe notes, an interpretivist, constructivist approach rejects positivism where:

knowledge is built up piece by piece, by accumulation of an evergrowing and increasingly complex arrangement of passively received observations. Instead, knowledge... must be seen as actively constructed – as culturally and historically grounded, as laden with moral and political values, and as serving certain interests and purposes'

(Howe, 2001: 202).

## **3.2 Data collection methods**

### **3.2.1 Overview**

It is evident in many qualitative studies that one of the preferred methods of data collection is by interview (Silverman, 2006: 113). Although in some ways field notes and/or journal records (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990: 5) might have been appropriate for a study of student teachers, it might also have presented something of an ethical problem in acting both as researcher and as the trainee teachers' tutor and I wanted to separate the research in some way from the participants' day-to-day training. Although the risks might have been perceived as minimal, I was conscious, as an 'insider researcher', of the potential for 'ethical dilemmas' and their implications (Smith & Holian, 2008: 39; see also Mercer, 2007: 13), as well as the difficulty, perhaps impossibility, of being able to 'renounce [my] prior knowledge' (Mannay, 2010: 93). Silverman notes a potential aim of interviewing as 'to access the stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds (narrativism)' (Silverman, 2000: 136), which appears to fit helpfully with the interpretivist approach. While open-ended interviews are likely to result in 'rich data' (ibid.: 110), they might also result in less focus on aspects of the student teachers' choices. In addition, open-ended interviews may not allow for the prompting included in a semi-structured approach, which is likely, in this study, to be necessary to follow up aspects of the interviewees' experiences. Semi-structured interviews offer the advantage of focus while also allowing the interviewee to express influences and experiences seen as important to her/him.

This exploratory study uses two semi-structured interviews with thirteen Classics PGCE students. The first interview took place towards the end of their one-year teacher training course and the second around one year later, after their first year of work as qualified teachers. The data collection also includes analysis of a written task submitted by the students at the start of the course. Although not a life history study, the research explores the personal, historical, cultural experiences which have led the participants to choose a career in teaching and one thing they all have in common is having been students in school. At the beginning of the course, all PGCE students submit an essay on their experiences of school, with the focus on recalling their own experiences on 'the other side of the desk'. It is likely, as noted in the literature, that prior experiences may have an impact on the desire to enter the teaching profession and on the type of teacher we would like to be, or not to be. The trainee teachers write this essay before they have begun teaching practice and are encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences rather than to view it as an 'assignment'. It was therefore a suitable source of data to compare and contrast with aspects of the interviews.

The project represents a small-scale study. A large-scale study has the advantage of eliminating some variables simply by including greater numbers from which to generalise; such studies could, therefore, be seen as more representative, yielding results with external validity and reliability. However, large-scale studies do not often explain why something is happening, simply that it is. Furthermore, since the Classics PGCE course is offered by only two institutions, the approach taken is necessarily small-scale.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

The current study explores the reasons *why* some Classics graduates choose a career in teaching and requires more depth than might be provided in a questionnaire, more often associated with large-scale studies; it was felt, therefore, that interviews were appropriate for this type of exploratory study as the main form of data collection. The study requires contextualised information on experiences, approaches and influences, which are likely to be more effectively obtained through interviews. Similarly, approaches to, and influences on, teaching as a career are likely to involve the

expression of attitudes, which may be more easily accessed through interviews than through other methods. As Silverman (2006) notes, 'we can treat [interview] responses as *displays* of perspectives and moral forms' (p. 144) and, since the study aims to explore the points of view of the trainee teachers in the sample, interviews seemed to be an appropriate method of collecting data.

As Kvale (1996) indicates, qualitative research implies an understanding that 'there are meaningful relations to be interpreted' (p. 11) and conceives of the interview as an '*inter view*' (p. 14) in that the participants, interviewer and interviewee, are involved in exchanges which concern their views on particular subjects through interaction and thereby mutually produce knowledge. Put simply, the researcher 'asks questions of the interview subject in order to obtain knowledge about his or her life situation' (Kvale, 1996: 23) and to understand it 'from the subjects' own perspectives' (p. 27).

As individuals are likely vary in the type and extent of influence, as well as previous experiences, one-to-one interviews were selected as more effective than other methods in this context (such as focus groups). In addition, holding one-to-one discussions, either in my office or in the students' schools, are routine as part of the PGCE course and would therefore, it was hoped, seem relatively natural as an interview setting; this would therefore encourage the participants to speak as freely as could be expected, to get as close as possible to the ideal "'feeling" of the unforced conversations of everyday life' (Wilson, 1996: 95). In this respect, there are distinct benefits to being an insider researcher, with the probability of putting the participants at their ease, leading to 'open conversation and a willingness to disclose' (Hodkinson, 2005: 139). Although tutorials or similar discussions are not normally recorded, as an interview would be, digital audio-recording devices are sufficiently unobtrusive that, at least once the interview has begun, it is unlikely to 'inhibit responses' (Bell, 2010: 167) and allows the researcher to be fully engaged in the interview rather than having to make notes.

An advantage of interviewing as a data collection method is its 'adaptability' (Bell, 2010: 161), allowing for more depth in probing responses, for example, and for this reason a semi-structured, or 'guided' interview approach (ibid.: 165) was adopted. Such an approach allows all interviews to follow a similar framework, addressing

particular themes, but gives scope for individuals to lead the discussion to an extent, adding to the authenticity of the data (Silverman, 2006: 20). Bias in interviews is a potential issue and perhaps especially so in semi-structured or guided interviews. On the other hand, the interviewee has more scope to convey their individual story than in a questionnaire or structured interview; nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the potential for bias, both in conducting interviews and in their analysis, which will be discussed below. Similarly, it must be borne in mind that interviews form 'representations' of people's experiences, rather than 'facts' (Silverman, 2006: 117) and can only convey what respondents choose to reveal in the context of what they are willing and able to recall.

### **3.2.3 Essays**

A written task was explored alongside the first interviews. All PGCE students write an essay on their experience of school as learners. The task is given to them over the summer and they hand it in during the first week of the course. It is not an assessed piece but aims for student teachers, in reflecting on their own experiences from the learner's point of view, to begin a career of self-reflection (cf. Schon, 1983) and understand that such experiences contribute to their development as teachers. This information is conveyed to them although it is largely an open exercise (samples Appendix III, p. 168ff; Appendix IV, p. 174ff). The task itself is open-ended but it was seen as helpful in contributing to the third and fourth research questions in that it was likely to elucidate the participants' educational path as well as conveying their early views on teaching. As such, it represents the first insight into their views on teachers and teaching. Although one advantage of the essay being set early in the course is a lack of preconceptions of what might be expected, it might also be the case that, for the same reason, students are keen to convey a particular impression of themselves. Nonetheless, the essays might provide a version of the respondents' experience of school, which is explored as part of the first interviews, from a different viewpoint.

### 3.3 Sampling

In sampling terms, the whole population for research would be all trainee teachers on the PGCE course in Classics in 2009/10 (Table 1, p. 51f). Since it is a one-year pre-service postgraduate course offered by only two institutions, the participants from one institution invited to take part represent around half of the available population, thus forming a 'representative sample' (Bryman, 2004: 87; Cohen et al., 2007: 108).

Although in this sense they constitute a self-selected group, the ethical considerations, which will be discussed below, mean that they are under no obligation to take part.

The sample includes both genders and a range of prior experience. The balance between the schools previously attended, that is, state maintained or independent sector, is almost equal. While the potential sample fits the criteria required, they clearly also demonstrate advantageous practical characteristics in that they attend the university and are all likely to be equally available at various points on the course and therefore represent an accessible sample. In a sense, therefore, the sampling is purposive (Silverman, 2006: 306f; Cohen et al., 2007: 114f) and focuses on what could loosely be termed a 'critical case' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003: 103; Cohen et al., 2007: 176), being one of only two such groups each year and therefore representing 'knowledgeable people' within the terms of the study (Cohen et al., 2007: 115).

All students were approached and all thirteen agreed to take part in the research. The group was relatively similar to recent cohorts in that there were more females than males and only one had joined the course straight after graduating, with seven others having graduated one or two years earlier. These eight could be described as having 'limited work experience', with four others falling into the category of 'early career switchers' (Hammond, 2002: 136), having graduated between three and six years prior to starting the course. One student had already had a successful career of some length. Of the thirteen, nine were women and four were men, with their ages ranging from 21 to 53 at the start of the course. The mean age was 26.5.

All were academically well-qualified, with A-levels or equivalents ranging from 320 UCAS points<sup>5</sup> (discounting AS<sup>6</sup> points), equivalent to three A-levels at grades ABB, to 480 UCAS points, or four A grades. The mean score for the group is slightly more than three A grades. The median and mode scores are both equivalent to three A grades. Their mode and median degree class is 2.1. Seven were educated in the state sector at secondary level and six in the independent sector. Twelve attended Russell Group universities with seven of the group being Oxbridge graduates.

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<sup>5</sup> A tariff system which allocates points to qualifications at various levels, to facilitate selection for Higher Education courses.

<sup>6</sup> Advanced subsidiary courses form the first part of a 'full' Advanced-level qualification but may also stand alone as a qualification; it is the latter which have been omitted from the calculations.

Table 1: Participant information

Name	Gender	Age (at start of PGCE)	Years since graduation (at start of PGCE)	Degree Class	A-Level or equivalent Points	A-Level or equivalent Grades	Type of School: Secondary Education	Type of School: First Post after PGCE
Adrienne	Female	22y 10m	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	440	AAAC	Girls' Independent	Mixed Comprehensive
Amber	Female	27y 3m	5	MSc	336	AAAAC	Mixed Comprehensive	Mixed Independent Prep
Camilla	Female	21y 1m	0	2.1	360	AAA	Girls' Grammar	Boys' Grammar
Ginny	Female	25y 9m	4	2.1	480	AAAA	Girls' Independent	Boys' Grammar
Helen	Female	53y 3m	25+	2.1	360	AAA	Girls' Voluntary Aided <sup>7</sup>	Girls' Grammar
Hugo	Male	27y 6m	6	2.1	440	AABB	Mixed Independent	Boys' Independent

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<sup>7</sup>Combined state funding and fee-paying.



Name	Gender	Age (at start of PGCE)	Years since graduation (at start of PGCE)	Degree Class	A-Level or equivalent Points	A-Level or equivalent Grades	Type of School: Secondary Education	Type of School: First Post after PGCE
Joey	Male	24y 6m	3	2.1	320	AAC	Boys' Grammar	Girls' Grammar
Kate	Female	23y 4m	1	2.1	460	AAAB	Mixed Independent & Girls' Independent	Girls' Independent
Louise	Female	24y 8m	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	480	AAAA	Girls' Grammar	Mixed Independent
Ozzie	Male	23y 1m	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	360	AAA	Boys' Independent	Girls' Independent
Pippa	Female	24y 2m	1	2.1	360	AAA	Mixed Independent	Mixed Independent
Tristan	Male	23y 4m	1	2.2	480	AAAA	Mixed Comprehensive	Boys' Independent
Willow	Female	24y 6m	2	1 <sup>st</sup>	320	ABB	Mixed Comprehensive	Mixed Independent

### 3.4 Ethics

Three basic ethical considerations are those of 'informed consent... right to privacy... and protection from harm' (Fontana & Frey, 1998: 70). In respect of informed consent, this was sought from the participants at the outset of the research, after securing ethical clearance from the institution (Appendix I, p. 164ff; Appendix II, p. 166f). Participants were made aware that most of the research would be conducted by interview but permission was also sought to use biographical information, such as age and qualifications obtained, contained in their applications to the course. Informed consent, according to Christians (2005), must take into account the following: 'First, subjects must agree voluntarily to participate – that is, without physical or psychological coercion. Second, their agreement must be based on full and open information' (p. 144). To this end, the participants were given a written outline of the aims of the study and the methods planned, which they were able to discuss with me, allowing for clarification before involving themselves in the project (Bell, 2010: 160f). An element of informed consent, according to Kvale (1996), is ensuring that participants are aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, which was also made clear in the consent forms. In addition, since semi-structured interviews may follow unforeseen paths, participants were aware that the interviews were being recorded and would then be transcribed. Transcripts were returned to the participants to ensure they had time to review the contents of their interview, as well as to ensure accuracy of the recording and transcribing process. As Kvale (1996) cautions, the interview can be 'seductive and lead subjects to disclose information they may later regret' (p. 116) and the opportunity to review the interview transcripts also allowed participants to ensure they were happy with the contents. In respect of the participants' rights to privacy, they were assured that their names would be changed and references to identifying information, such as school names, would be anonymised. Protection from harm is more difficult to quantify. While the study is low risk in many respects, in that the participants were all capable adults and were fully informed of the aims of the research, such harm may be difficult to predict. Perhaps the most obvious

potential for harm was the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants, which will be discussed below.

The 'power and status dynamic' (Cohen et al., 2007: 374; also Kvale, 1996: 126) between tutor/researcher and tutee/participant was a potential difficulty. As observed by Sikes & Potts (2008), in such 'insider' research situations, relationships are constantly changing as 'new (research related) concerns and understandings are brought into the frame' (p. 4). It is important to bear in mind that such changes may have negative as well as positive outcomes. The information given to the participants assured them that their participation or otherwise would have no effect on their experience or the outcomes of the course. The interviews were timed towards the end of their course partly to fit in with the coverage of the data collected, so that first interview would take place before the participants began their roles as qualified teachers, and partly because, by that stage of the course, not only was there an established relationship of trust between tutor and tutees, it was also already clear that all students were going to pass and move to the next stage, as Newly Qualified Teachers. Nonetheless, it was essential to be sensitive to this relationship and be alert for any potential issues. Ultimately, as Kvale (1996) indicates, 'the integrity of the researcher – his or her honesty and fairness, knowledge, and experience – are the decisive factors' (p. 117) and this needs to be borne in mind.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

Validity in interview data can be assisted through the avoidance of bias, which potentially arises, according to Cohen et al. (2007), from the interviewer, the respondent and the interview questions themselves (p. 150). In conducting the interview, the researcher needs to be aware of her/his own characteristics and preconceptions and avoid imposing them on the respondent and her/his answers. While it might be helpful that the respondents were all training to be Classics teachers and the researcher has been in the same role, this might in itself create an expectation of what the participants feel the researcher may want to hear. On the one hand, the role of insider researcher may be an advantage, bringing with it a 'detailed

understanding' of the issues (Smith & Holian, 2008: 40; see also Mercer, 2007: 6), although it is, of course, possible that this understanding may also lead to 'too many assumptions' (ibid.). On the other hand, the interviewees are, in fact, very much in charge of aspects of the interview and what is disclosed and therefore the power could be considered to be fluid rather than one-sided (Cohen et al., 2007: 152).

It has been suggested that reliability in interviewing is enhanced through, for example, 'a highly structured interview' (ibid.: 150) which uses the same wording for each respondent. On the other hand, the more open interview has been noted as important in allowing individuals 'to demonstrate their unique way of looking at the world' (ibid.: 151) and allows for probing individual responses. Cohen et al (2007) also point out that increased control of this type, while it may lead to greater reliability, may also result in reduced validity (p. 153).

Another consideration for the use of interviews is the awareness of 'social desirability' or 'acquiescence' responses (Wilson, 1996: 99). That is, sometimes answers are deliberately designed to show the respondent in a positive light or the respondent simply answers in agreement regardless of the question. For this reason I created open questions, which were intended not to be leading, so that the interviewees would not be guided to present themselves in a particular way.

### **3.6 Design and conduct of interviews.**

According to Bell (1999), 'Causal relationships can rarely if ever be proved by survey method. The main emphasis is on fact-finding' (p.14). Although it may be similarly difficult to demonstrate causal relationships in an interview, it was felt in the current study that a semi-structured interview would allow greater depth in the exploration of influences on the decision to teach. Furthermore, 'a skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do' (Bell, 1999: 135). It was therefore decided to construct a semi-structured interview schedule, including a mix of open and closed questions.

### **3.6.1 Construction of the interview schedules**

Richardson & Watt (2005) constructed a survey exploring reasons for choosing teaching as a career consisting of twenty 'closed' items and nine open-ended items. This served as a useful starting point, along with a twenty-item questionnaire constructed by Kryiacou & Benmansour (1999) and these items were sent to previous cohorts from the same Classics PGCE course to obtain opinions on the questions. These teachers were given the general purpose of the study, to explore influences on the decision to train to teach, and were asked to comment on the items in relation to relevance and clarity. Although not a pilot as such, it is similar to such an approach, recommended by Seale (1999), of asking a similar group of people the same questions and asking what the questions mean to them (p. 35).

Seven individuals responded and included comments on some irrelevancies, such as statements referring to increased respect or status, which were felt by them to be unlikely in the current climate (but could be borne in mind nonetheless) and comments suggesting clarifications. In addition, some specified those statements which had been relevant for them in choosing teaching and others which they felt might apply even if not relevant for them. Others gave examples of people they knew who were thinking of teaching but were deterred, for example, by salary considerations. Two suggested adding a question relating to teachers in the family, which was included as part of other questions discussed below; one individual commented on the amount of marketing that teaching has had in recent years, for example the teaching adverts on television. The decision was made not to include this as a specific question as it was felt it might emerge if it were a particular influence. These comments were then taken into account, along with the literature review, in constructing the schedules to address the research questions.

The schedule for both interviews was designed to incorporate open questioning, mindful of wanting to avoid leading questions (Kvale, 1996: 12). As Denscombe (2003) and others indicate, it is sensible to begin with a general question and for the first interview, this was: 'When did you decide to become a teacher?' (Appendix V, p. 179). In terms of recall, and in fact reality, this may have been rather a difficult open question; for that reason, a comment was also added to reassure the participants that

they may well not recall as single moment. This question, and its related prompt, 'Can you identify any influences?' related to the first research question: why choose teaching. In practice, however, the prompt was not always included explicitly because of the direction of the interview, intended as it was to be led by the participant as well as the researcher, with 'an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories of the subjects' (Kvale, 1996: 124). However, a question was also included at the end of the interview asking whether there had been any influences on the decision to teach which had not already been mentioned, which therefore assisted in overcoming this gap.

The literature had suggested that an engagement with the subject was, for some, an important influence on the decision to teach (Hammond, 2002; Younger et al., 2004) and for this reason the subsequent two questions addressed the issue of the participants' degree subject and to what extent the decision to teach and the subject itself were linked. This therefore addressed the second research question relating to the decision to teach *Classics* specifically.

It was hoped that some of the prompts to the first three interview questions might elicit information on the detail of the individual's path towards teaching. To expand on this, the middle section of the interview included questions on the participants' experience of school along with other career options and people or mechanisms consulted in relation to teaching. This section was therefore intended to elucidate the third research question on the relationship, or otherwise, between the participants' background, in terms of school, family and other influences. In addition a question on their future post and the type of school might add to this aspect of the research.

The fourth research question, on the participants' development and how their views of teaching might evolve over the transition from trainee to newly qualified teacher, was addressed with a question on any doubts they may have had up to the point of the interview, their future plans in teaching and their views on the characteristics of good teachers and teaching. These would then act as precursors to questions in the second interview.

Although some of the previous studies seemed to vary in relation to their findings on salary and status, questions were included on the material rewards and on the perceptions of others to the fact that the participants were training to be teachers. Perceptions of teaching and expectations have been noted as influential and therefore were also considered in the schedule.

The second interview schedule was intended partly to confirm the researcher's accuracy in interpreting the first interview and to follow up issues which may have arisen in analysing the first interview alongside the written task. For this reason, although a semi-structured schedule was constructed, these were personalised to some extent. Initially, the elements in the decision to enter teaching were summarised, interpreted and the interviewee was asked for confirmation or otherwise (Kvale, 1996: 23). Some of the universal questions followed up responses from interview one to elucidate the fourth research question, on the participants' development in relation to their expectations of teaching, their views of its material rewards, their evolving views of good teaching and their future plans. In relation to points emerging from the analysis of the first interviews, there appeared to be more frequent mentions than anticipated of media influences, on the participants' early interest in Classics and/or in teaching and a question was included to check this with others. An impression was also given that Classics, and in some cases therefore teaching Classics had a 'special' quality and this was therefore explored specifically in the second schedule. Finally, participants were asked about their parents' occupations, if this information had not already been noted.

The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder to allow for transcribing, in order to assist accurate analysis over time. Although video recording may have assisted in reflecting body language and non-verbal clues, it was felt that the participants would feel more at ease with an unobtrusive recorder and this would enhance the nature of their responses. Both sets of interviews were intended to last approximately forty minutes and, once transcribed, were emailed to the participants to check for accuracy. None made any changes other than, in a few cases, to clarify where the recording had been difficult to hear.

### 3.7 Analysis

It is important, in this type of qualitative study, to avoid preconceptions in approaching the analysis of the data, while recognising that, inevitably, analysis is 'a creative process...to impose a structure on the accumulated material' (Powney & Watts, 1987: 11; see also Boulton & Hammersley, 1996: 289; Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 12). For this reason, the analysis methods did not use pre-established codes (Morehouse, 2012: 52). The process of analysis involved interpretation, selection and omission, although I aimed for authenticity in analysing and representing the data. As Powney & Watts (1987) also observe, this type of research explores 'insider stories' (p. 159) and the categories are 'shaped in the analyst's interpretive constructions' (ibid.). As such, coding by hand rather than by software allowed the exploration of alternative explanations of the data, although it may be subjected to criticism on the grounds of researcher subjectivity. Whereas there are software packages which can help with the process of coding, Denscombe warns that 'there is a justifiable fear, then, that slavishly following the conventions and procedures built into the software programs will kill off the intuitive art of analysis in qualitative research' (Denscombe, 2003: 276). My codes emerged through a mixture of 'spontaneous coding', that is in the participants' own terms, and 'observer identified', that is constructed by me as researcher.

Qualitative studies, as observed by Huberman & Miles (1998), aim to 'describe and explain (at some level) a pattern of relationships' (p. 185) and they note the legitimacy of either beginning with 'conceptually specified categories... (deductively)' or of reaching them 'gradually (inductively)' (p. 185). In particular, 'Interviews do not appear to give us direct access to the 'facts'...or to events. Interviews do not tell us directly about individuals' 'experiences' but instead offer indirect 'representations' of those experiences' (Silverman, 2006: 117).

Analysis of the data aims 'to provide a way of simplifying the data without discarding complexity' (Morehouse, 2012: 85). Huberman & Miles (1998) note three parts to data analysis: 'data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification' (p. 180). For this analysis, interview transcripts were read alongside the audio-recording to gain a sense



of the whole interview and to assist in achieving 'immersion' (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1279). A random selection of three interviews were then re-read and highlights were made on each to mark sections which appeared to be significant and 'capturing key thoughts or concepts' (ibid.: 1279; see also Boulton & Hammersley, 1996, p. 290). This form of open-coding marked the beginning of the development of 'categories to illuminate the data' (Silverman, 2006: 7). These highlights could be considered as 'natural meaning units' (Kvale, 1996: 194), that is, the original words of significance which form a 'complete idea or concept or interaction' (Morehouse, 2012: 86).

After this process, the same three interviews were revisited in order to review the highlights and make notes in the margins to indicate potentially important concepts, in a manner similar to Kvale's (1996) 'meaning condensation' (p. 194), where the sense is reduced and stated in a simpler form but the concepts and categories which arise from this process 'represent similar meanings' to the original, larger text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1278). The first interview notes were then compared with the second and third, in order to confirm significant concepts, or in some cases to put them aside for the moment, returning to them after the next set of interview transcripts. Thus the iterative process is akin to the constant comparison method of Glaser & Strauss (1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), although not part of a strict grounded theory study, and results in the noting of 'patterns and themes' (Huberman & Miles, 1998: 187).

The concepts highlighted then either formed categories themselves or were 'clustered' or grouped into broader categories (ibid.: 187; Bell, 2010: 222). The same process was applied to the other sets of interviews, with the last two being pairs (because of the number involved). After all transcripts had been reviewed as described, an overview of all transcripts was once again taken in order to refine, discard or possibly add, categories and verify the allocation of concepts to categories. One set of three and one pair of transcripts were sent to a 'critical friend' in order to provide an external view of the significant concepts and potential themes, thereby assisting with the problem of reliability (Silverman, 2006: 46). The input from a 'critical friend' who does not know the participants, their subject or even the university was thus intended to minimise the danger that 'when a researcher is working in familiar territory...their findings will be overshadowed by the enclosed, self-contained world of common understanding'

(Mannay, 2010: 94; see also Drake, 2010: 85). As noted above, the categories either formed their own themes or were placed into broader themes, which were then interrogated in relation to each other and to the aims of the study, resulting in the 'essential, nonredundant themes of the entire interview' being 'tied together into [a] descriptive statement[s]' (Kvale, 1996: 194). This 'scanning and refining process' (Powney & Watts, 1987: 105) continued through writing up notes of the analyses of both sets of interviews, providing 'a reduced set of data as a basis for thinking about its meanings' (Huberman & Miles, 1998: 180) in the sense of data display, as noted above. This formed the second part of the analysis, in preparation for synthesising the results of both.

The approach taken in analysing the essays and interviews can be viewed as 'iterative' (Bryman, 2004); it constitutes an inductive approach (Cresswell, 2007) and includes elements borrowed from versions of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000). In short, the researcher begins with 'scan[ning the data] without prior hypotheses' and leads to the develop[ment of] a set of categories to illuminate [the] data' (Silverman, 2006: 7). In grounded theory terms (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the essays and interviews represent 'description' (p. 16) in that they convey the account of events and experiences of each of the respondents. However, they are subject to the particular purpose of each; that is, the essays have been composed as the first written task for the course. Although it is not a graded piece, there may be impressions and events the individual is not comfortable relating at this stage of the course. Although in practice, students do describe negative or sensitive experiences, it cannot be assumed that all have done so. These descriptions, then, are subject themselves to interpretation of the purpose of the task and the audience.

As Silverman (2006) observes, an interview transcription in itself forms a type of 'text' (p. 153); however, the experience of school essays are slightly different in that they were not specifically written for the purposes of this study. Although not strictly adhering to content analysis in the sense of pre-determined categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Silverman, 2006: 159), the analysis of the essays differed slightly from that of the interviews in that, once the same 'thematic' analysis (Silverman, 2006: 159) process had been undertaken, the essays were re-examined in the context of the first

interview transcripts and themes in order to assist in the construction of the second interview schedules.

The next step in developing any possible explanations and relationships is, according to Strauss & Corbin (1998) the organisation of the data collected and involves the selection, and omission, of parts of the data and establishing relationships therein. In qualitative analysis of this type, it is important to be open and 'give voice to the respondents' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 43) and to 'think comparatively' (ibid.), to compare each response or individual set of data with the next, and to continue to do so, returning to the data and developing concepts as analysis proceeds.

The coding, and the formation of categories in the current study aimed to achieve an 'authenticity' (Silverman, 2006: 20) in exploring the respondents' experiences, rather than adopting a 'content analysis' approach; the latter approach commonly entails a strict set of categories which the researcher then uses to count the number of occurrences of concepts within that category (Silverman, 2006: 20). While this may therefore be viewed as reliable in terms of analysis, it may also be the case that, in some studies, the understanding of some concepts is missed.

In accessing such stories and the analysis of the interview transcripts in the study, two approaches need to be borne in mind: ascertaining the similarities to findings in the literature; being open-minded to the possibility of very different findings. In analysing the interviews for the initial strand, I initially took the approach that the lengthy transcripts could be distilled into categories (Weber, 1990, in Cohen et al., 2007: 475) and this process was led by the areas of investigation rather than the data itself. This therefore makes it more likely to produce 'replicable and valid inferences from texts' (Krippendorp, 2004, in Cohen et al., 2007: 475). Although a form of coding, I am not taking a strict 'content analysis' approach as identified above, since the process should strictly speaking be both qualitative and quantitative, in the case of this small-scale study it may be ambitious to make too many generalisations. Nonetheless, it may be possible to ascertain emergent themes and this could be done by noting synonymous statements (Powney & Watts, 1987: 163), by reading through the transcripts several times and marking passages or comments, and then highlighting different potential

categories. Following this process, I identified categories from amongst those noted in the literature above, and was led to others. So the categorising of initial themes will in fact relate to testing the evidence of the literature in this particular case.

The study, then, is small-scale, focusing on one cohort of students in one institution. It builds up a picture from the students' own experiences of school as learners, and how they reflect on them, at the start of the course, alongside their reasons, as far as they express them, for choosing to go into teaching, as recalled towards the end of their course. At this point they are also able to reflect on their development in terms of their expectations and preconceptions of teaching, as well as to consider how they view their future in teaching. In addition, the final interview provides an opportunity for them to reflect on the accuracy of their preconceptions as well as give further indication of their motivations to teach Classics. The following chapter outlines the findings of the research project.

## **4 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This chapter details the findings from the data sets; the essays written by trainee teachers at an early stage of their PGCE and the two in-depth semi-structured interviews. The findings are discussed without reference to the literature, which will be included in the subsequent chapter. The data were coded and analysed in order to explore any aspects that might have influenced their choice of teaching as a career, that is research question one; in addition, it considers whether the desire to teach is linked with the choice of subject, that is, whether Classical subjects were intrinsic to the choice of teaching, research question two. In relation to the third research question, it was hoped that the data might indicate if any biographical factors had influenced this choice. Fourthly, since the first interview took place towards the end of the participants' PGCE year and the second after their first year in teaching, it was hoped to gain insight into the developing views of these recently qualified teachers.

### **4.1 Experience of school essays**

The student teachers are set the task, of reflecting on their own school experiences, during the summer before they begin their PGCE (samples Appendix III, p. 168ff; Appendix IV, p. 174ff). They are asked to reflect on the different beliefs, values and perceptions and styles of teaching and learning they have experienced. This section considers the participants' thoughts on their own schooling, their views on effective teaching and attempts to highlight potential areas for comparison and contrast with themes arising from subsequent interviews with the participants. Although student teachers submit the essays in written form to their tutors after the first two weeks of the course, the essays are significant in representing the participants' 'freshest' views on teaching and learning and their experiences thereof, prior to undertaking the theoretical and practical demands of their PGCE year. It is the closest we can get to their pre-teaching views, as they progress from intending teachers, to trainee teachers and finally to qualified teachers. Thus they provide a context for the views expressed subsequently, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.1.1 Fitting the mould versus inequity**

Perhaps it is no surprise that the participants' accounts of their experience of school reflect generally positive recollections. It seems, as one might expect, that most of these potential teachers present themselves as having had a successful education and of 'fitting in' academically and socially. Whether they attended a state or independent school, boarding or day, they seem, for the most part, to have 'ticked all the right boxes', as Helen describes it. Clearly certain qualifications would have been required to progress at each level of education, between GCSE and the PGCE, but, as already noted, the respondents have all been academically extremely successful at school and university.

Hugo conveys the same sense of fitting in as Helen, particularly at his prep school, where there seemed to be strict rules and what he calls a 'one size fits all' approach. As a child in this environment, he 'readily conformed to the status quo' and therefore rarely transgressed and was frequently rewarded for hard work, again, something which is likely to lead to a positive approach to school. Although most of the participants do not describe the rules and regulations of their schooling, Hugo recalls the fact that he 'thrived under the rigorous rules and strict nature of prep school'; in spite of this, he is also aware that this rigorous system which worked for him did not work for others and specifically comments on the potentially negative impact of the strict rewards and punishment system as representing for some 'a weekly reminder of their failings' which might 'only have served to demoralise and demotivate'. The other respondents are also evidently aware, in describing their experiences, that building confidence in students is an important element of teaching, although this is expressed generally in reflecting not on themselves but on how some of their peers might have experienced school; their views on elements of effective teaching, such as building confidence, will be discussed later.

Ozzie, like Hugo and Helen, enjoyed school but similarly comments on the fact that some students may not have had the same positive experiences as he had, describing as one of the weaknesses of his secondary school an 'inability in some teachers to engage or support those who were struggling'; he comments on the fact that learning difficulties were not well supported and the learning support department was 'small

and poorly advertised'. Interestingly one of the positive elements of his boarding secondary school, in Ozzie's view, was its timetabled structure, with 'almost every hour of the day' planned, while for Pippa, the 'strict routine' at her secondary school, also boarding, led, in her view, to pupils 'losing part of our identities'. She does not explicitly outline any personal unhappiness but does convey the impression of viewing her time at secondary school a little less positively than others. It is interesting to note that Louise, although referring to her experience of working for a short time at a boarding school, prior to the PGCE, also sees such 'micromanagement' of the students' time as actively discouraging independence, which might be viewed as limiting the developing identities of young people as suggested by Pippa. Pippa's view of the constrictions of boarding school, and her implied loss of identity, stand in stark contrast to her prep school experience, a school 'whose innocence was protected' and where she felt she and her fellow pupils were nurtured to become 'real little people'. Ozzie, however, seems to express an opposite view of a similar institutional approach, suggesting that the strictly organised routines of his boarding school provided individuals with opportunities to 'explore their own interests and to shape their beliefs'. Nonetheless, he highlights a negative aspect of his school as its inability, in some areas, to cater for all students, expressed by Pippa as some of her peers being overlooked and 'pass[ing] on the periphery'. Not surprisingly, bearing in mind her comments on identity, Pippa is one of the students, along with Willow, whose secondary school experience is not described as largely positive, which might provide a slightly different context for their motivation to teach in each case.

Although Camilla attended a day school, she similarly comments on what might be viewed as a lack of freedom to develop imposed by an emphasis on examinations. While she was happy at her secondary school, she reflects on her experiences with a critical eye and considers her selective state school as having been perhaps overly focused on examination success; she had the impression that 'academic achievement was most important', in some cases 'at the expense of personal development'. She also expresses the view that some of her peers felt that 'they were being forced to conform to an image with which they were not comfortable', suggesting a similar view to that of Hugo and Helen, with all three being successful and generally enjoying school but aware that the situation did not suit everybody. Ginny perhaps is one of the most

positive in reflecting on her schooling but she also notes the 'inevitable pressure to perform in public examinations' and, like the others already mentioned, does think that there were some of her peers, notably those seen as less successful academically, 'who felt they were let down'.

In addition to a feeling that others may have felt 'let down', some of the participants were quite definite in their observations of inequity in the form of favouritism or, as Ginny describes it, 'some talents [being] more equal than others in the eyes of the school'. Adrienne and Helen also have strong memories of favouritism which, it might be hoped, would have an impact on their future teaching approaches. For Adrienne it is a particular primary school teacher who stands out as having 'obvious class favourites' rather than including the whole class. Helen also has an early memory of being unfairly punished at primary school, as well as feeling overlooked by not being placed in the top group although her work was, she felt, 'as good as theirs'. While there is clearly a justified sense of inequity if this were the case, there appears also to be a competitive element in this comment, and a wish to be placed in the top group. On the other hand, it is not surprising that students who produce 'good work' feel that it should be acknowledged. Others noticing the detrimental effects of similar impartiality were generally not recipients of its negativity but were nonetheless aware of it. In Helen's secondary school, a number of her peers who 'would have stood out in most schools', in terms of their achievements, felt 'discouraged, undervalued' and even 'positively disliked by some teachers', for whatever reason. Camilla is unequivocal in describing preferential treatment as directed, at least in the sixth-form, towards those who were applying to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge, or those intending 'to become doctors, dentists or vets', suggesting a rather exclusive group. This is in line with Helen's category of ticking 'all the right boxes' at her school, one of the criteria of which seemed to be 'Oxbridge material'. Similarly Ginny feels some of her secondary teachers took the view that 'only the top students' work was worth noting', and remembers them demonstrating this practically by returning the yearly examination papers in grade-order. Perhaps Louise sums up the perspectives of many of the participants, describing the 'strong bonds that we created with our teachers', which she recognises could have been viewed as 'rather obvious favouritism' by those not included and she is quite open about having appreciated it at the time but realising its



impact on others: 'although it was one of the reasons I was so happy at school, it is not to the school's credit'.

Although Pippa comments on several negative experiences at her secondary school, she nonetheless has some positive memories of school, in particular of her prep school, being 'the kind of school you don't find anymore'; she appears to suggest this as a particularly caring and nurturing environment and attributes what she views as its current rarity to changes in the demands for schools of curriculum requirements and administrative and procedural changes such as Health & Safety regulations. Willow provides a stronger contrast with the other participants than Pippa, devoting the majority of her essay to negative experiences than to positive. While she remembers her primary school fondly, her memories of secondary school are 'less positive overall' and she presents herself as in the category of pupils mentioned by others, who felt 'let down by my school and some of my teachers'. Although she mitigates the situation by suggesting the demands of class sizes generally and the needs of the 'more able' and more disruptive students specifically would not have been easy to manage, she felt 'unsupported, under-praised' and, like some of the peers described by Helen, 'even ignored or disliked'. Consequently she 'rarely received any praise or acknowledgement' for her work and had the impression it 'was of little consequence' to her teachers. Understandably she had a strong feeling at the time that her situation was 'not right' and, as a counter-identifier in this study, she explains these negative experiences as 'one of the defining motivations in my decision to become a teacher myself'. An exception, however, to the descriptions of negative experiences described by Willow was 'the passion for Classics that my Classical Civilisation teacher helped me realise' during her A-level. It is perhaps to be anticipated that teachers training for the secondary phase will recall positive experiences of the subject they have chosen to teach and the influence of the respondents' school experience of Classics will be discussed next.

#### **4.1.2 The influence of Classics at school**

Few of the participants describe their Classics teachers specifically as part of their inspiration to teach; indeed they are not especially prominent in many of the

recollections. Ozzie, however, is exceptional in describing his school experience of Classics and the department whose:

support for me academically and personally, and the ability of the best teachers to excite my interest inside and outside of the classroom setting has been my biggest inspiration to become a teacher. To emulate them would be the greatest of success for me.

Nonetheless, according to Hugo, 'the teachers who stand out most are unsurprisingly my Latin teachers' and this is true of several of the participants. Willow's recollections of Classics stand in contrast with much of her experience, and she expresses gratitude to her A-level Classical Civilisation teacher for enthusing her, and therefore deciding to study Classics at university. On the other hand, as noted above, there were less positive reasons for her initially considering teaching itself as a career. Aside from Ozzie, Hugo, and Willow's recollections of her A-level, four others explicitly mention their Classics lessons and teachers positively. Helen recalls one of her Latin teachers as an inspirational teacher, 'striding around the classroom' or using a soft toy to demonstrate noun endings. Kate makes a general observation but includes her Latin teacher in it: 'I loved to listen to an enthusiastic teacher talk about their subject, especially my Latin teacher' but she does not elaborate on that teaching specifically. Clearly students who have pursued subjects to A-level and then undergraduate level are likely to have had positive experiences of those subjects, although for some they do not appear to stand out until GCSE level. Tristan and Ginny both recall encountering their inspirational teachers at GCSE, with Tristan observing that his passion for Classics was first ignited by a new teacher for GCSE and Ginny recalling her teacher 'lighting up the room with his energy and enthusiasm'. Ginny is unusual, however, in already having developed an interest in the Roman world around the age of ten so would already have been well-disposed to the subject on arriving at secondary school. Perhaps, as alluded to above, the enjoyment, by GCSE age and beyond is almost inevitable since opting for Latin GCSE, along with Classical Greek in the case of Ozzie, Joey and Camilla, at age fourteen is likely to indicate a willingness and enthusiasm which has already been established for most people. Indeed Hugo indicates that he enjoyed his secondary school Latin lessons, in contrast with his prep school, because the teaching style was quite 'permissive' which he suggests relates to the subject being

'elective by this stage'. Thus it might be assumed that all enjoyed their GCSE Latin, or in Adrienne's case GCSE Classical Civilisation, but remarkably five of the group do not comment, or only in passing, on their experience of Classical subjects in particular and for most of the others it forms only a minor part of their discussions.

Conversely, Amber's experiences of Latin convey the impression of being rather disorganised and Louise presents her Classics teaching relatively critically, pointing out that 'on reflection, our [Latin] language teaching was not particularly good' and suggests this was partly due to a lack of focus on syntax before A-level. Similarly, she feels her GCSE Latin literature teaching lacked discussion of literary analysis and makes the strong suggestion that this may even have been 'irresponsible' teaching. She does describe her A-level teaching as faultless, although she then goes on to suggest a paucity of tests to prepare them for examination questions as a failing. As already noted, Louise is perhaps analysing her Classics teaching in more depth, and with a more critical perspective, having already had some teaching experience by the time of her PGCE.

Overall, there is only a marginal sense of the participants' Classics experience at school as standing out in any special way but perhaps that is not uncommon in recalling aspects of life as a school pupil. Ozzie, as already observed, is the sole participant who cites his Classics teachers as important in his choice of career; however, in discussing aspects of effective teaching he also notes that small class sizes in Classics, particularly at A-level, 'helped to engender a family-like sense amongst Classicists', which was something he found particularly inspiring. The other participants, although not analogising in the same way, also note the importance of relationships and a sense of community in teaching generally and it is this to which we will turn next.

#### **4.1.3 The importance of the interpersonal**

It is to be hoped that future teachers will have well-developed interpersonal skills and be aware of their importance in working with young people. In reflecting on their experiences, the participants indeed often comment on the importance of relationships, of being treated as individuals and of feeling valued. Pippa, as is frequently the case,

sums up this perspective succinctly: 'I believe that the best schools or teachers can give *attention* to each pupil, and from that, *opportunity* for them to excel and succeed as far as they can'. The teachers who succeed in this, she suggests, are more than 'teachers' and she classes them as 'mentors', teachers who have 'time and respect for each child'. Attention to each student as an individual is something which Adrienne also views as important and experienced herself, recalling a teacher who took an interest in every member of the class and who would follow up individuals' interests, and another who was 'genuinely interested in our opinions'. Tristan suggests that teachers' relationships with students should help them develop not only academically but into 'wholly rounded individuals'. Ozzie agrees and gives the impression of many of his teachers, and other staff, at boarding school as providing attention and opportunity, and, as one might expect of a boarding school, it was not simply a question of teaching but attempting 'to bring us up'. He points out that, in such a system, there are opportunities for 'connecting with the pupil on a more personal level', which he sees as important. Similarly, he observes that a boarding school offers a variety of staff, such as housemasters, chaplains, school counsellors and others who were 'all easily accessible and ready to offer their time'. In addition, he notes the importance of extra-curricular opportunities in building strong relationships between teachers and student, as do Camilla and Willow; although she recalls predominantly negative experiences of school, Willow comments on the most effective of her primary school's lessons as those which 'encourage[d] a good relationship between the teacher and pupils', and the extra-curricular activities which enabled pupils to 'foster good relationships with different teachers'.

It seems, perhaps understandably, that what the participants appreciated in some of their school experiences was being treated not simply as learners but as people, where their ideas as well as their work were valued but not merely in order to succeed in examinations. Kate, for example, remembers teachers who 'valued contribution more than being correct' and suggests that those lessons were 'even better when the teacher valued your opinion too', something which she suggests helped her confidence, being a relatively self-conscious child. Although Joey does not describe himself in the same way, his school experiences have led him to believe that teachers need to 'foster a sense of confidence' and that this is particularly important for 'risk-averse' students who may

not cope well with anxiety. Kate mentions a number of such experiences, such as the benefits of group-work and the feedback given on written work. It is no surprise that the participants remember this aspect as leading to increased confidence, which Joey logically suggests might 'extend outside those walls', alongside a positive learning atmosphere. Although, as noted above, several students recalled a lack of support for those of their peers who were struggling, Camilla remembers several teachers who did spend time with those pupils and did so not in order that they might achieve better grades but in order to increase their confidence generally.

A supportive learning atmosphere in which learners feel confident is clearly important and Joey points out that it is 'the most important factor in enabling a child to learn'. Such an environment seems to have been, for many, assisted by what Ozzie describes as teachers creating 'a communal learning atmosphere' where lessons would 'feed upon ideas generated by the pupils', ideas which would be 'carefully shifted and shaped' by the teacher. Adrienne also comments on 'the best lessons [being] those which engage the students and involve them in the learning process'. Most of the participants similarly highlight elements of collaboration and a communal approach. Joey points out, in contrast with lessons he recalls as 'not particularly constructive', where students were 'put on the spot', the effectiveness of lessons which encouraged collaboration, where errors were managed in a positive manner and suggestions were made at times through peer review. This element of 'team spirit' is also observed by Ozzie in discussing his tutors at school, although again, some of this appears to be related to the wider possibilities for interaction between students and staff available at a boarding school. On the other hand, Ginny feels that her day school provided a number of similar opportunities through cross-curricular projects and extra-curricular activities which enabled students to work outside their usual groupings and which seemed generally to build confidence. Strong relationships and a sense of collaboration appear to be important in building student confidence but clearly effective teaching and learning will include other elements and the participants' perceptions of what constitutes effective teaching will be discussed next.

#### **4.1.4 Ideals of effective teaching and teachers**

In recounting their experiences of school, the participants reflect on the qualities of effective teaching and teachers, either implicitly in their descriptions or as explicit comments on approaches they would like to include or avoid in their future practice. These generally relate to affective factors rather than detailed pedagogy, as might be expected at this stage, before the participants have begun their teaching course. Implied in the descriptions are elements already mentioned, such as the importance of valuing students as individuals and supporting them in developing into confident young adults as well as supporting and encouraging their academic progress; this idea is encapsulated in Pippa's definition of teachers as mentors, that is, 'those who can give [attention and opportunity] with a full heart'. Ozzie also explicitly notes the importance for him as a prospective teacher in engaging with students in a variety of ways and settings, particularly extra-curricular, in order to benefit the teacher-student relationship and provide opportunities for students to develop their interests, creativity and sense of identity. Willow's negative experiences of the teacher-student relationship lead her to similar conclusions: 'I think it is of vital importance for teachers to try to foster a more meaningful relationship with pupils than those I experienced'. In relation to confidence specifically, Kate takes from some of her memories a focus on avoiding putting students 'on the spot' in a way which might lead to embarrassment, particularly for more reserved students, and the recognition that a 'supportive class atmosphere is vital'. Joey draws similar conclusions from his schooling and suggests that such high pressure situations are 'not particularly constructive' and concludes, as do others, that creating a positive atmosphere will be important in his teaching. Hugo reflects similarly on the difficulties of including competition in teaching and keeps in mind for his future teaching 'that incentivising tasks worked for the more able pupils but perhaps served only to demotivate others'. The importance of creating a positive classroom is an understandable issue for teachers but Joey elaborates on how this might be created, suggesting that 'modes of delivery, levels of praise and methods and manner of assessment can all contribute to this', along with fairness and resources. Here he moves a little closer to reflecting on pedagogical matters than most of his peers.

These student teachers have generally been successful at all levels of examinations but several comment on an over-emphasis on this aspect of teaching and learning. Included in Pippa's description of teachers as mentors are teachers who 'care more for our understanding than the aims and limits of the syllabus' and this is something she hopes to emulate by teaching students '*around* the syllabus'. Again, this aspect contributes to the overall impression from the participants that the best teachers are those who take a broad view of what the job entails and, as Ozzie refers to it, 'a multi-faceted approach' to supporting students. Like Pippa, Camilla comments on a focus on academic achievement, 'with a view only to the exams', as advantageous in one way but 'at the expense of the personal development of the students'. Pippa also remembers much of the teaching at secondary school as exam-focused and recalls being 'taught how to answer a question like a mathematical formula', which led to 'the charm being sapped out of many of my subjects'. Ginny, in spite of her positive experiences, feels that her school suffered from the 'inevitable pressure to perform in public examinations' in a league-table society. In contrast, Louise, who has already reflected a little more pedagogical detail, recalls feeling a sense of frustration during some of her classes that they were not sufficiently focused on the examinations and now suggests that there is a 'fine line to be drawn between under- and over-preparing students' in relation to exam technique.

As might be expected, there is a suggestion that confidence in one's subject knowledge is an important element in successful teaching. On the other hand, Helen gives the impression that many of her teachers knew their subjects well but were not necessarily able to teach them, being 'academics' rather than 'natural teachers'. Others also imply that subject knowledge is not in itself sufficient and needs to be accompanied by a passion for the subject and an ability to convey that enthusiastically. Ozzie suggests that it was the teachers who had 'a clear passion for their subject that they were able to transmit' who most easily gained respect; this might also imply the importance of respect for teachers, although this is generally not mentioned explicitly. Willow seems to concur in relation to subject knowledge, having experienced several teacher who appeared 'unenthusiastic' about their subjects and therefore about students' learning; she comments on one of the most important aspects of teaching that she learned at secondary school: 'teachers must give pupils a reason to be interested in the subject by

making their own enthusiasm for it evident', something she noticed in her Classical Civilisation teacher. One of her aspirations now that she is embarking on teaching is therefore 'to bring my enthusiasm for the subject to teaching'. Joey expresses a similar point, that it is a 'teacher's duty to inspire his pupils through his love of the subject'.

While they are not explicit in articulating respect as important, Joey mentions a 'presence' rather than teachers simply imposing their authority, although inevitably this presence is rather difficult to define. He suggests, however, that organisation might be helpful and Ozzie agrees, recalling weak teaching as 'often chaotic and marked by the difficulty of transmitting any message'. Several of the participants mention classroom and behaviour management, as well as organisation, as contributing to effective teaching. Adrienne, for example, comments on one teacher who appeared to lack confidence in her subject knowledge and therefore, she suggests, was not able to manage the class or to impose any sense of discipline. Similarly Adrienne remembers positively those lessons which were well-planned and 'had direction'. Hugo encapsulates the views expressed by most of the group in his aspiration: 'I would try to emulate those teachers who maintained discipline, were fair and displayed a genuine enthusiasm for their subject'.

In terms of the technicalities and practicalities of effective teaching, although they do not express detailed views, many of the participants mention the importance of variety, creativity and flexibility. Hugo remembers a 'more varied approach' at secondary school as effective in catering for a range of students; Ozzie, Kate, Willow and Camilla also mention the importance of variety such as incorporating art, drama, different media and extra-curricular activities. Kate and Tristan relate this to the importance of acknowledging different students' learning styles. In addition, Kate is explicit in bearing in mind for her future teaching that a 'balance [of] approaches' is required and has 'taken note of how a creative approach... can really enliven a lesson'. Joey refers to his own enjoyment of lessons which allowed for 'a variety of means of expressing myself and my knowledge' and will look to incorporate those in his teaching. Included as an aspect of a varied approach seems to be a flexible approach mentioned by some. Camilla recalls as ineffective those teachers who lacked flexibility in their explanations and were unable to adapt for different students. Ozzie makes the same point in noting



that his most successful teachers were 'relaxed and flexible' and able to 'come at ideas from different angles if a message wasn't getting through'. Similarly he is aware that they altered their approach in response to 'the mood and energy levels in the classroom'.

Although most of the participants refer to affective factors and rather esoteric issues, Adrienne highlights the importance of encouraging students to be 'active learners' and includes activities such as participating in class discussions. Kate also remembers some of the best teaching as that in which she was 'actively using the material', thereby increasing her confidence in the work. She adds a caveat, however, in that she will need to be aware of those students who, like her, may feel self-conscious in some activities of this type. Such active learning seems, in several participants' opinion, to lead to students developing greater autonomy and an ability to think for themselves. This is something Hugo recalls from his secondary education when students were 'allowed to find our own way to a greater extent'; a similar opinion on the value of autonomy is expressed by Ginny and Louise. Pippa reflects on her future in teaching in recalling that one of her father's strengths was 'inspiring the children to think for themselves'. This perhaps reflects the opinions observed earlier on the importance of personal development.

Although the above suggests a broad consensus on elements of effective teaching, Adrienne and Kate each take from their experience of reflecting on their own education that, as Kate suggests, a balance of styles is important. Adrienne specifically recalls two very different but effective teachers and now feels that 'there is no single teaching style that is correct and effective'.

While there are some positive experiences highlighted, and one or two negative elements, overall the essays reflect the importance, for the participants, of young people's personal development; teachers need not only to build their confidence but convey their own enthusiasm for their subject and their interest in their pupils as individuals; they need to engage their classes in their learning, rather than simply pass it on. The participants convey the view that learning is a shared experience, although the detail of that experience is, for the most part, lacking, as might be expected at this

stage of their careers. Perhaps two aspects of the essays stand out: there is an emphasis on affective issues in teaching and learning and perhaps a surprising lack of emphasis on the participants' school experiences of their chosen subject.

The next section considers the findings from the two sets of interviews and, where applicable, refers to opinions expressed in the essays.

## **4.2 Interviews**

The interviews, alongside the essays, were analysed in order to assess the influences on the participants' choice of teaching as a career, that is research question one; in addition, they were intended to explore to what extent the desire to teach is linked with the choice of subject, that is, whether Classical subjects were intrinsic to the choice of teaching, research question two. In relation to the third research question, it was hoped that the data might indicate whether the path to teaching and the influences along that path relate to the background and experiences of the participants. Fourthly, since the first interview took place towards the end of the participants' PGCE year and the second after their first year in teaching, it was hoped to gain an overview of the developing views of these recently qualified teachers. Many of the themes emerge in both sets of interviews and have therefore been treated together. Where this is not the case, this has been indicated (sample of interview 1 can be found in Appendix VI, p. 181ff; Appendix VII, p. 196ff; interview 2 in Appendix VIII, p. 217ff; Appendix IX, p. 230ff).

### **4.2.1 A cycle of aspirations**

The most common theme to emerge from the participants is a view of themselves as involved in a cycle of aspirations. There is a sense in which they have been inspired, by people and experiences, to challenge themselves, to succeed, and to aspire to something, although that something is not necessarily made explicit. Following on from this is their own desire to be part of the same cycle for the next generation of school children. This notion, of one generation working for the next, is most clearly expressed by Pippa, whose early positive experiences of being around school partly

relate to having parents who worked at her junior school and, as a consequence, having a number of teachers as family friends. This she expresses as having 'grown up around extraordinary people who worked to help others', thus representing the cycle of teachers as capable of inspiring others, who might then go on to inspire others themselves, and so on, and representing the altruistic nature of elements of motivation to teach. Her father appears to represent the strongest influence here, and the father-child relationship could be seen as a traditional embodiment of the passing on of values, experience, and received wisdom. Pippa's father's influence on her career choice, however, is something which has only recently struck her: 'I suppose, the fundamental thing, which never really clicked until recently, was that my dad was a teacher'. She notes his influence on those he taught as far-reaching and comments that 'the effect he's had on adults now, that's really something'; it seems that she frequently hears of his influence and inspiration from his ex-pupils and is very much aware of how he has affected the lives of others. She finds this 'super-inspiring' and talks of 'following in his footsteps', something which seems to have become all the more important 'because I've lost him'.

The notion of wanting to make a difference to others is also expressed explicitly by Camilla, who is unusual in the group in that she had a sense of vocation from around the age of thirteen, but for another of the 'caring' occupations. Nonetheless, her earlier choice was led by a desire to help others and she notes this in commenting that she realised that she could help as many people by becoming a teacher, a decision she had made before starting university. For Camilla, the wish to help others may also have stemmed from her family, as appears to be the case for Pippa, and from the experience of loss at a young age. She explains this in the second interview, pinpointing the loss of her father as leading her to become 'a lot more empathetic' and to feel that, because of her life experiences, she would be in a position to help others. Although it may be true that younger children would not, in any case, show a particular vocational interest in helping people, Camilla is quite emphatic that this loss 'altered my perception... and what I wanted to be dramatically'. Although at that stage Camilla envisaged a different path, it was only a few years later that it occurred to her that she could help as many people through teaching: 'it's not exactly the same but you can still have a huge influence on somebody's life'. So it seems that the potential for helping young people

was inspired by Camilla's own and her family's situation, from which she emerged with a determination to help others, thus representing the cycle of aspirations described above.

The family setting, as observed above, may be a traditional source of such a cycle, and the influence of a close relative may concentrate particular characteristics once that person is lost. Thus it may be that the loss itself is the significant influence. Although the situation in which Helen made her decision to train to teach arose from a variety of circumstances which are, in themselves, practicalities, such as finding herself with more free time, it may be that losing her father also prompted 'a whole rethink' in terms of how she 'was going to fill that vacuum'.

Even when the family member is a distant figure, however, and the inspiration is difficult to unpack, there may still be an effect on motivation. Ozzie, for example, never knew his grandfather, who was a teacher, but finds the idea of following in his footsteps 'attractive', although he acknowledges that this may appear 'ridiculous' given the lack of a tangible relationship.

Although less dramatically so than some of the familial examples already noted, it is not surprising that teachers were sometimes mentioned as influential, through their role in passing on a sense of aspiration. Joey, for example, is unusual in deciding on teaching even before secondary school, at the age of eleven, primarily because of his own teachers; he was aware that he had very good teachers at primary school giving him 'a push ...and the confidence to be able to go to grammar school'. He notes this, and a key moment when teachers suggested to his parents that he sit the examination for the grammar school, as explicitly influential in his career choice and teaching remained his choice from that point. In terms of becoming part of a cycle of aspirations, it is interesting that he, along with two of those educated in grammar schools, then found a post in the same type of school and suggests that is where he feels comfortable. The one participant who did not pursue a post in a grammar school nonetheless comments, during her first interview, that 'it's where we want to end up'.

Experiencing positive inspiration of this sort seems, therefore, to have led, for several of the group, to a desire to replicate that situation for others and to make a difference in their lives. Tristan's interest in teaching was prompted, he noted in the first interview, by a teaching-related television programme. In the second interview, however, he elaborates on his thoughts on the programme and the fact that he recognised some of the characteristics in people he knew who were teachers, including his mother. He comments on their feeling that teaching 'might make some sort of difference to somebody somewhere'. Several participants such as Camilla and Ginny had some experience of working with young people while at university and Ginny reflects on her summer school work with young children 'if you make a difference to them that's extremely satisfying', although element of satisfaction could be seen as more intrinsically motivated and an element of self-actualisation. Again, Pippa expresses the altruistic notion of making a difference most clearly, in relation to her father's influence as a teacher: 'If I can make that tiny bit of difference, it'll be worth something'. This feeling is reiterated in her view of her previous job, where 'if I was making a difference it was only fleeting', implying the often cited teacher's desire to 'make a difference' as influential in her career choice.

A more distant source of influence to become part of this cycle of aspirations was, for three of the participants, the advertising campaign by the Teacher Training Agency<sup>8</sup>, along the lines of 'No-one forgets a good teacher', a sentiment aligned with the comments already noted from some of the participants. Pippa's desire to 'make a difference' was reinforced by these adverts, broadcast in her late teens and she notes them as effective and a relatively significant influence: 'I know it's really corny but... I just thought, that's really inspiring'. Willow was also inspired by the adverts but, unlike Pippa, because of her negative experience of the influence of teachers. Whereas Pippa considers the adverts as reinforcements, Willow suggests they prompted her to consider teaching quite seriously. She recalls watching the campaign advertisements

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<sup>8</sup> A body set up in the Education Act of 1994 to manage the provision of teacher training. It was relaunched as the Teaching and Development Agency in 2005 and in 2011 became the Teaching Agency.

and feeling 'negatively inspired' to teach because she had not experienced such an impact from teachers while at school. She does recall one inspirational teacher whom she encountered as a mature student after leaving school; she does not mention the Classical Civilisation teacher noted in her essay until the second interview, where she comments on her as inspiring. Her first thoughts, however, were of disappointment at the lack of those role models in her own experience, and of a desire to remedy such situations for the next generation: 'I thought that's really sad... I thought, I want to become a teacher, and look out for the quiet ones and look out for people like me'. Joey also comments on the adverts: 'I don't think it told me anything I didn't already know', implying, as already noted, that even from a young age, he 'quite liked the idea of that anyway', of being part of 'that magical phase when he works out what quantum mechanics is'. The description of that 'magical' phase might suggest an idealistic, albeit potentially desirable view of the importance of teaching. Joey and Willow, along with Ozzie, had thought of teaching as a potential career separately from teaching a particular subject, although Willow now says she could not imagine herself teaching another subject, having partly made her degree choice based on what she might enjoy teaching. In that sense, the subject is also important but does not pre-date the idea of teaching. For most of the others, however, the subject itself is an important influence in their desire to teach and the role of Classics specifically will be considered next.

#### **4.2.2 Passing on the Classical baton**

For many of the participants, within the cycle of aspirations, there is a strong sense of Classics as integral to that cycle; the participants' desire to open up opportunities for young people often reveals a sense of a 'crusade' in ensuring that those opportunities include access to Classical subjects. Although most of the group did not consciously consider teaching while at school, once the decision was made it seems, for all but a few, to be inextricably linked with maintaining the provision of Classics in schools. Although Tristan is, in some ways, the least explicit of the group in terms of passing on a sense of general aspiration and the altruistic ideal of 'making a difference', he does encapsulate the notion of passing on the Classical baton within that cycle: 'if I could get a person to think... Virgil's great, I want to do Classics and end up doing the same thing

as me, then job done', representing in one sentence his route to Classics and then Classics teaching, and indicating a full cycle of aspirations completed.

For Camilla, along with several others, there is a definite indication that teaching Classics involves ensuring its continued existence for the next generation. Although she was educated in the state sector and is going to teach in the same type of school, she does indicate that her desire to maintain Classics teaching is not specific to state schools, and simply relates it to the fact that, in her view, there are too few schools in general offering Classical subjects. For Ginny, on the other hand, her desire to teach appears to be linked more politically to teaching Classics, specifically once she had ascertained that there were comprehensives which offered Classical subjects; this was very important to her in making the decision to teach as she feels it is important to try to balance out what she calls the 'luck' of having attended an independent school. The fact that she was 'lucky', she says, means that someone else was 'unlucky' and she is explicit in her political stance in relation to education, in that it 'can't be a fair world that those who pay money, or pay more money, get a better education than others'. In this sense, she is very much part of the cycle of aspirations but this is clearly related to her interest in Classical subjects. Because of her desire to teach in the state system, she briefly considered applying to teach another subject but soon came to the realisation that she would not approach it with the same passion. She feels 'more could be done to balance things out a bit' in terms of education sectors and for this reason had been looking to teach Classics in a non-selective state school: 'bringing Classics to comprehensive, state schools, that is genuinely a big reason' behind her motivation to teach. Helen expresses similar sentiments: 'it's sort of...not exactly a political thing...you know, it's the fairness of [the state system]' being able to 'give the opportunities to all'. This fairness was perhaps highlighted by the fact that, in attending state schools, one of her children had the opportunity to study Latin and her other child did not.

The importance of passing on the Classical baton is also clearly expressed by Kate; she is perhaps unusual in that she thinks she would probably have chosen teaching eventually. She is unequivocal, however, that it would have taken longer to reach the decision had it not been for Classics. She feels that, had she been intending to teach

English, for example, she would not have felt the need to enter teacher training when she did because, with Classics, 'if you don't do it then there might not be someone else'. For Kate, there is very much a sense of urgency involved in ensuring Classical subjects continue to be offered in school and, once she had decided on teaching, she knew she wanted to 'procreate Classics within schools', to give others 'the same opportunities'. She conveys a feeling of responsibility in doing so. Ginny, similarly, expresses this responsibility as akin to a 'duty' in that, had she studied another subject, she 'probably wouldn't have felt... as much of a duty, well perhaps duty's a bit too strong'.

Adrienne also highlights the importance of providing access to Classics in her motivation to teach. Her motivation, however, combines wanting to maintain the provision of Classical subjects in schools with wanting to maintain her own engagement with Classics. She also notes that she probably would not have taught if not Classics, in spite of the fact that she feels teaching is something 'in the family' and she has always enjoyed learning and teaching experiences. Like Ginny, she attended an independent school herself but was also definite in wanting to begin her teaching career in a state school. During the second interview, however, she explains that, unlike Ginny but perhaps similar to Camilla, her choice of sector is not politically motivated. The choice was partly influenced by her experience of working in a state school between university and the PGCE, where she had been able to do some Latin teaching. It was through working there that she became aware that those children would not otherwise have been exposed to a subject they seemed to enjoy, as she 'started to realise not that many schools do it', suggesting this was not necessarily something of which she was aware prior to taking up the position.

For several participants, ensuring the provision of Classics for the next generation is conveyed as an altruistic motivation, alongside the notion of making a difference outlined earlier, in providing a breadth of opportunities for young people; for a few others this is expressed as more intrinsically motivated, in that Classics is something they have enjoyed and part of the attraction of teaching is to maintain their own connection with the subject. Adrienne, as mentioned above, highlights the altruistic and the intrinsic in her motivation, in that teaching Classics combines her interest in working with young people and her desire to continue with Classics. Louise, on the



other hand, appears to place more emphasis on Classics, revealing in the second interview that, having spent three years working extremely hard on her subjects while at university, she was loath to give up the connection with them.

Whichever strands of influence appear more explicit, whether altruistic motivations such as 'making a difference' or more intrinsic motivations such as maintaining an engagement with their subject, there is a sense from many of the participants of there being something special about Classical subjects, and therefore teaching Classics, which will be discussed below.

#### **4.2.3 The 'specialness' of Classics**

Although Pippa's altruistic motives have been noted, she also feels that it is teaching *Classics* which has been an important influence; when asked at the end of the first interview, if there is anything she would like to add, she comments on 'what a valuable subject I think Classics is. I'm not sure I would have been inspired...', thereby implying the importance of the subject in her inspiration, as well as the nature of teaching itself. Pippa seems to have been drawn to Latin and Classics generally but not necessarily via a smooth path; she describes it, in her second interview, rather romantically as like a best friend who had been there all the time but who, she suddenly realises, is her great love. Although she 'loved Latin right from the start', she also had a 'constant battle' with it. Occasionally she considered giving up Latin at school, for example when she was struggling to make a choice between Latin and Spanish, and although in fact her father insisted she take Latin, she also notes, 'I couldn't, I wouldn't allow myself' to give it up. Similarly, when she made her A-level choices and wanted to take Latin in place of another subject, she had to fight quite hard for her choice as she had been given a scholarship for the other subject and was therefore expected to study it for A-level in order to retain the scholarship. So although Pippa does not comment on the 'specialness' of Classics in the same way as some other respondents, it appears that she was somehow drawn to Classical subjects. In selecting her degree, Classics appears to have been inevitable in the same way but again she seemed to struggle with it at this point, perhaps because her father had studied English, although she is not explicit in expressing that as a reason. In recalling that she was initially intending to combine

both English and Classics at university, she again articulates a sense of a calling to Classics: 'I finally allowed myself to be who I am, no English, straight Classics'.

Although Adrienne combines the importance of teaching and of teaching Classics specifically, initially at least, it appears that the subject was more important in her career choice than the teaching. While at university, for example, she was unsure about careers and explicitly comments on not knowing that she wanted to teach. It was not until the end of her course when she realised she did not want to leave her subject behind and, thinking about what she could do with her degree, thought, 'I could be a Classics teacher'. On the other hand, as noted above, she then states that she would not necessarily have gone into teaching if not for Classics, and the significance of her awareness that 'not many schools do it'. In spite of the importance, then, of the subject, in terms of her impression at school, Adrienne did not convey a sense of Classics as special during the first interview and her arrival at a new school meant she was simply given a timetable which included Classical Civilisation. On questioning during the second interview, however, looking back on her experiences, she now considers herself 'lucky' in having had the opportunity to study Classics at school.

Amber had also not seriously considered teaching until after university and, although there was a combination of elements which crystallised to lead to her decision, part of that decision was, as for Adrienne, the potential for combining working with young people and using her degree. Again like Adrienne, however, she also goes on to say that 'it's definitely Classics-based, a lot of it, more than teaching, but then I'm not sure', because it seems, as for many of the participants, difficult to hypothesise about other potential decisions, and, ultimately, it is Classical subjects about which they are 'passionate'. Again, Amber encapsulates this passion for the subject and the combination of that passion with the desire to 'pass on the baton', as discussed above:

because Classics, especially, is a subject I'd fight for, just to have in any form, because it's been so threatened, so the idea of it just disappearing and allowing that to happen by not teaching anymore is quite upsetting... I don't think it would matter how difficult it [teaching] was, I'd still do it.

Her description of the importance of the subject suggests, as does Pippa's romantic analogy, an emotional attachment. For Willow, too, the appeal of teaching is linked to teaching Classics but expressed in less emotional terms. Teaching first came to mind when she was in the sixth-form, by the end of which, in deciding on her degree subject, she specifically thought of what she 'would be most comfortable teaching'. Thus, in a way, it was teaching which led her to her choice of degree. On the other hand, when she was not enjoying some parts of her degree during her second year, she put aside the idea of teaching until her final year, when she once again began to enjoy her subject.

Like Willow, Kate had not thought of teaching until university but knew, from about the age of fifteen, that she would study Classics for her degree, partly because of her success and enjoyment, but also its intrinsic 'value, worth'. She is explicit in conveying an awareness of the 'specialness' of Classics from early on:

the biggest thing the Latin teachers did when I was at school was that they made you feel quite special... Because you were doing Latin and it was a special thing.

Not only, it appears, was Latin special but students who studied Latin felt special. Two other participants highlight a sense of 'intrigue' about the Classical world; Amber describes the ancient world as 'a bit cryptic' and 'something a bit more special' and Ginny's interest in the Classics was sparked when, as a young child, she read the novel *I, Claudius* and 'loved the sort of intrigue of [it]'.

Classics is clearly important for all the participants, having chosen a related degree, but the sense of its 'specialness' is conveyed differently by individuals; for some, as noted, there seems to be an aura about Classics in general, which they felt from the beginning. Three notable exceptions are Camilla, Willow and Joey, who perhaps have in common an earlier sense of vocation than the others, and in the case of Joey and Willow would have taught even if not Classics. Interestingly, they also attended state schools, where it might be expected that Latin would be seen as more unusual than in some independent schools. Nevertheless, they do not convey the same awareness of the 'special' place of Latin, or comment on its challenging nature at school. Joey,

specifically, is definite about the fact that teaching was his vocation rather than teaching Classics. He does recall, after attending an Open Evening prior to beginning his secondary school, being intrigued by the presence of Latin, a subject he knew was unusual. Nonetheless, he is clear that, had he attended a different secondary school and studied different subjects, he would have become a teacher. The notion of Classics as special is conveyed less strongly since he is a teacher first and a Classics teacher second. Camilla, similarly, considered her career earlier than most others. Although she remembers enjoying her Latin and Greek lessons, she is clear, in the second interview, that she was not aware of anything special about Classics at school. Since she had been, until sixth-form, on course for a career in psychology, her A-level option discussions were focused on which sciences were required for a psychology degree, and how to resolve timetable clashes in order for her to pursue them. By the time these discussions were resolved she had had a change of heart about psychology and her Latin and History A-levels led her towards a different degree path.

While Joey, Camilla and Willow considered teaching while relatively young, Louise made her decision to teach later and conveys it as something of a 'snap decision'. Like them, however, she did not convey an awareness of Latin/Classics as special, even when asked specifically about this during the second interview. In spite of Classics being one of the initial driving forces for her choice of career, Louise indicates that Latin was not considered special at her school, a selective state school, nor did it appear unusual to her to study Classics at university as her mother had done so. This neutrality is reiterated when she adds that one of the reasons she chose Classics at university was to avoid studying the same subject as her sibling, having followed similar paths until that point.

Other participants, however, express specific aspects of Classical subjects which attracted them at an early age, such as: the challenging nature of the languages; their rarity on the curriculum; the status they seemed to convey on those studying them. These will be discussed below.

#### **4.2.3.1 Classical Subjects as Challenging**

Some of the participants experienced Classical subjects as compulsory and others made option choices but all, unsurprisingly, enjoyed Classical subjects at school and, again perhaps predictably, were high achievers in those subjects. For twelve of the thirteen participants, their first encounter with Classics was Latin and several noted its challenging nature as part of its attraction. Tristan is an exception among the participants in that he did not enjoy Latin at first but once he did, 'had this feeling of doing something...very very clever. And I suppose that's important, that it's challenging'. One of the reasons Tristan did not enjoy Latin initially was the amount of time spent on the paralinguistic material, which could be seen as less challenging, and quite different from Latin language or literature: 'the Roman army, I thought, I just don't care'. His view changed, as will be noted below, on beginning to read Latin literature. Amber also specifically noted enjoying Latin because it was challenging, in particular the language side. Because Latin teaching at her school 'had been a bit of a shambles', practically speaking, a great deal of focus and commitment was required in order to succeed and she notes, in her second interview, that this contributed to her sense of achievement. Ginny similarly notes the enjoyment from the challenging nature of Latin and, as is to be expected with challenges in which one succeeds, that enjoyment and success gave her confidence as it was a subject seen as difficult 'but I could do it'. She remembers being given different work from others in the class because she found it easy, and recalls on one occasion being sent with alternative work to the library, again perhaps contributing to feeling a sense of achievement from a subject which not everybody did and, among those who did, not everybody found easy. Perhaps, just as Kate recalls her Latin teachers making their students feel special, Ginny may have felt similarly in the ease with which she was able to approach work, which will be discussed later.

Although others did not specifically comment on the challenge of Classics at school, most were aware that it was unusual in some way, which will be discussed next.

#### 4.2.3.2 Classical Subjects as Unusual or Different

For Ginny, the sense of there being something unusual in studying and achieving in Latin also stemmed from her having friends outside school, in schools which did not offer Latin; she was additionally aware that it was unusual, even within her school, where Latin classes were small. With only three students opting for A-level, they were excused the otherwise compulsory General Studies lessons 'because we were the special Latin ones'. Joey, as noted, was also aware it was not something everybody had the opportunity to study. He comments, in response to the question of 'specialness' in the second interview, that he was not aware of Latin being more challenging than other subjects but 'just being different'. Helen does not comment on this aspect of difference in quite the same way but decided on a Classics degree as soon she began Latin at school, around the age of twelve, because she 'was good at it, enjoyed it, and also I think partly it sort of set you apart a bit... You were slightly different'. Although, as noted above, a few respondents were less aware of anything unusual about Latin, Pippa is exceptional in having been aware of an element of difference and therefore 'resisting' Latin, at least to a certain extent, because, as a teenager 'I just wanted to hide, and if I chose Latin I would have stood out'.

Tristan, however, perceives the difference as largely inherent in the nature of the subject. He is unusual, alongside Amber and Willow, in having attended, and studied Latin in, a non-selective state school. Although Latin was not compulsory, it appeared to be something his parents thought he should take it up at school, he says, as they had both studied it to the age of sixteen and valued it. In his second interview, it also came to light that his parents felt this was an opportunity not everybody had, and therefore he should take it up. What appears to be a minor epiphany came for him around the age of fifteen when he began the set text for GCSE. He recalls the lesson in some detail, beginning a section of Virgil's *Aeneid* and he recalls thinking, 'some bloke wrote this 2000 years ago and look, it's still good...wow, imagine that'. He conveys a sense of 'other-worldliness' in this view; this is not dissimilar to Amber's comment on the ancient world in general as intriguing and ancient history being much more interesting, in her view, than more modern history because it is that much further removed from the present reality and requires stretches of the imagination to recreate it in one's mind.

Interestingly, some of those who were not aware of Latin or Classics generally as unusual when they were at school do comment on that aspect of the subject in the second interview, in relation to how they promote Classics now that they are in post, or how it appears to be viewed in their schools. Camilla, for example, feels that the parents at her school are very supportive of Classics partly because they know that not many schools offer it. Again, this may be a more common view in the state sector, in which she works. Indeed Amber's perception of Latin in her two placement schools and her first post is that state school students themselves have a greater appreciation of the subject simply because they are aware it is not something on offer in all schools. She does suggest, however, that this may relate to parental influence more than to the type of school. Hugo was also not aware of any special status for Classics at school beyond the fact that they were seen as unusual because fewer people studied them. However, in the second interview, he describes his current school as promoting a particular atmosphere, which he now suggests he 'probably did feel' when a pupil at school. This atmosphere he describes as promoting Classics as 'the clever subject, it will look good on your CV', conveying a sense of prestige related to the subject, to which we will turn next.

#### **4.2.4 Status**

Alongside the view of Latin as challenging and the implication that it was or is unusual, are more definite comments relating to a special status. There is a sense in which 'others' view studying Classics, and perhaps teaching Classics, as conferring a certain status. This appears to be partly related to difference, as described above, and partly to a sense of prestige, almost in the traditional élitist view of Classical subjects. As observed, Kate comments that 'they made you feel quite special' when studying Classics at school and Helen expands on this when she notes that studying Latin 'set you apart' because her school was selective but even within that 'ability' range, not everyone was able to excel at Latin. Tristan, although relating it to his degree at university, also notes a feeling of 'look at me, I'm very different'. Others were aware of a similar feeling but this perception of Latin as representing a special status was conveyed explicitly to Ginny by her GCSE teacher, who would tell the class that they

were 'really clever for doing this' and 'he'd see how far he could push us'. She also recalls being told that Latin would allow her access to 'the best universities' and that if she wanted to study at Oxford, for example, she ought to take Latin at school. Perhaps this awareness of prestige may be linked with her expressed unwillingness to think about teaching on graduating, when her friends were applying for 'exciting' jobs which seemed, to her, to hold more prestige than teaching.

Although Tristan clearly did not view being in a Latin class as special in the same way as others, he does observe that, on encountering Latin literature, 'straightaway, we felt like we were doing something quite serious and something important' and clearly, as noted above, by the time he had embarked upon a degree in Classics, he was aware of studying Classical subjects as a marker for difference, in the same way as Helen described it 'set[ting] you apart'; this had been the case for others from an earlier point, with Ginny, for example recalling responses of 'oh wow, Latin' to her studying Latin for GCSE. Although Ozzie does not convey the same sense of 'specialness' about Classics as many others, his experience of Greek at secondary school seems to have acted as a marker for difference, and thus conveyed a sense of status; he and two classmates had already studied some Greek and so 'went in a special class, so that was kind of fun and nice'. In relation to the importance of the subject, Ozzie also hypothesised that he might have entered teaching in any case, even had it not been Classics teaching. Although he is relatively unusual in this respect, the fact that he would only have taught subjects he viewed as 'academic' perhaps implies a concern with status and a view of Classical subjects as more academic than some others.

Classical subjects appear, as noted above, generally to hold a certain status, be it as unusual, challenging, or as something 'grown-up' and therefore teaching those subjects may be viewed similarly. The views of the participants in relation to teaching and to teaching *Classics*, and any assumptions made by others seem to be more mixed. In addition, as Tristan points out, how teaching *Classics* specifically might be viewed is not necessarily something one would know until beginning such a career. Ginny's impetus for teaching is very much grounded in the desire to teach in the state sector, to the extent that she briefly considered taking a PGCE in another subject. Nonetheless, once she has been teaching for a year, she enjoys 'telling people I'm a *Classics* teacher... I still



think that has an exciting, prestigious element to it'. She adds, however, that her view has changed during the year in that any excitement and prestige she had attributed to teaching Classics 'is probably true of all teachers', in contrast to Tristan, who feels, a year into teaching, that Classics teachers are 'a more interesting bunch' than teachers of some other subjects.

Although not explicitly looking for a job with status, as noted, Ginny had appeared to be deterred from applying for teacher training earlier on partly because of a perceived lack of status. She seems to have had teaching as a career, and specifically teaching Classics, in mind through university but, aside from the fact that she felt the need for a break from studying, she was also reluctant to apply for teacher training at that stage, feeling that teaching was not afforded much status generally. This view came to the fore in her final year when her friends were applying for well-paid jobs:

... [teaching] didn't sound like the most exciting of things. And my sort of more high flying friends, in inverted commas, getting paid shed-loads of money doing advertising, or consulting, or whatever, and to me, during university, that seemed like a much more exciting thing to be doing. So I didn't like to say it, rather stupidly I used to think – oh well, teaching doesn't sound that great.

This was in contrast with her view of Classical subjects at the time, as she 'loved the prestige with which it's [Classics] treated as well'.

This sense of teaching as perceived as less interesting than other careers appears to be rather an abstract view, not specifically based on the opinions of others, but one reiterated by several other participants. Hugo, for example, felt at a similar stage that teaching would be the expected, predictable, path for someone with an arts/humanities-based degree, perhaps hinting at teaching's lack of caché as a profession, expressing it as a common fallback choice, 'that's what everyone does', which he was therefore reluctant to make; Amber, more explicitly, appears to have viewed teaching as a choice people made by default, when they were unable to think of anything else and she was certainly unwilling to fall into the same trap, calling it 'the worst idea'. These three participants, Ginny, Hugo and Amber, had all spent some time in other jobs

after graduating and might, perhaps, have been, at least subconsciously, influenced by this general perception.

Perhaps an element of some of the perceptions stem from teaching being viewed as 'easy' rather than an occupation where not everyone would excel. Ozzie, Amber and Kate were aware of teachers being viewed as not particularly 'clever', with Ozzie, for example, being told at university that he was too clever to become a teacher and Kate finding she is often asked why she is teaching when she is clearly intelligent enough to have a degree. Adrienne, conversely, feels people assume she must be clever to be teaching Classics and again there is perhaps a sense of importance to which Classics appears to contribute, balancing out the perception of teaching as easy. These participants clearly took no account of this opinion, although Amber, along with Helen, briefly considered and rejected primary teaching as not sufficiently challenging. It could be, for Ozzie, that this view of teaching as 'easy' is balanced by a desire to teach something viewed as 'academic' and this may relate to the perception, as discussed above, of Classics as unusual in some way, seen by some as more challenging or prestigious than other subjects. Ozzie also recalls family and friends persuading him to consider other career options, which he ultimately did, initially applying for another career which 'seemed like a cool thing, it seemed quite prestigious', perhaps implying that those who suggested he looked beyond teaching might have viewed it as lacking prestige. He expands on this in the second interview, however, in explaining that his family view was broadly 'if you aren't going to do something really cool then why not go and make some money?' He suggests that, in choosing teaching, he 'went in the middle'. He also confesses that 'there is a part of me that thinks it is...that I could do better', which suggests he considers teaching, even an 'academic' subject, in the same way as those who attempted to dissuade him from the career. Conversely, during the second interview, Ozzie returns to the subject of the intellectual demands of teaching, suggesting that he is still irritated by the view of teaching as 'easy' but that, while 'for most people it's a difficult job, commitment-wise', he feels that, for him at this stage, it is in fact relatively easy.

To return to the traditional view of Classical subjects, Adrienne states during her first interview that people assume anyone who is teaching Classics was educated privately.

Although this is true of her secondary education, she appears to find it slightly exasperating that it is not an assumption made about her until people discover that she is a *Classics* teacher. On the other hand, she does not mention this during the second interview and indicates simply that ‘most people are impressed’ when she tells them she is a teacher, and particularly that she is a Classics teacher. Willow’s second interview, however, reflects some of the sentiments of Adrienne’s first. Perhaps because of circumstances particular to her at the time of the second interview, she ‘find[s] it a very élitist subject to teach in...’, a situation which she finds ‘disheartening’. This élitism is something of which she was unaware as a student, at her non-selective state school, where Latin and Classical Civilisation were popular and ‘choosing Latin wasn’t a big deal’ but something which she seems only to have encountered since entering the profession. Amber encounters a similar view to Adrienne, conveyed as inverted snobbery, which, when people realise she teaches Classics, seems to change their perception of her. Similarly they appear surprised that she is teaching Classics since she was not educated in the independent sector. Adrienne teaches in the state sector while Willow and Amber were both educated in comprehensives. This sense of exclusivity seems at odds with the notion expressed by several of the respondents of Classics as creating a sense of community, articulated by Ozzie as a ‘family feel’, which will be discussed next.

#### **4.2.5 A sense of community**

In some cases, as perhaps for Ginny above, the enjoyment of Classics lessons when at school may have related to small groups for Classics classes and this appears to have led to a feeling of belonging, almost as if to a club. It is difficult to isolate the appeal of this element, however. It may be viewed as an element of élitism, as noted above, for those ‘belonging’ to the club but it appears also to stem from a collegial feeling, perhaps due, in many cases as already mentioned, to the small class sizes.

Ginny’s closest friends also studied Latin with her at school and she observes that ‘we had this sort of thing where it was just us, and that felt quite nice I suppose’, partly conveying a sense of a close community and partly a feeling of ‘specialness’. Ginny also observes that, with a class of only five at GCSE and three at A-level, ‘it was very

personalised' and more like 'tutorials'. She does not comment, however, on a desire to replicate this situation as being influential in choosing teaching, whereas Ozzie specifically mentions this. He is clear that one element of his desire to teach Classics is the likelihood of smaller classes and therefore the potential for replicating the tutorial approach he enjoyed at school. During his second interview, it appears that he has found this to be the case as a teacher; although Classics is popular at his school and classes are not necessarily small, he nonetheless notes the 'family' feel already mentioned. So, as well as feeling different, there appears to be a sense in which a more personal approach is important, and the importance of the interpersonal element will be addressed later.

This personalised aspect, relating to small class sizes is mentioned by most of the group, even if not explicitly linked to a sense of community. Hugo, for example, observes that there is little which specifically stands out about his Classics teaching apart from small classes. He is unusual, however, in having been quite undecided about whether to take a Classics degree or another subject. Amber is another exception in that she, in fact, began a degree in a different subject before dropping it and beginning a Classics degree. She nonetheless recalls a sense of community in her school experience. She studied Latin for four years at a non-selective state school and her teacher seemed to have been teaching a number of things to students within the same class; while she comments on the chaotic nature of the class, in some respects, she also enjoyed the fact that she was 'left to get on with things'. While this appears to stand in contrast to the small, community feel conveyed by others in describing their Classics lessons, it is Amber who describes her experience at school as akin to belonging to a club. She recalls part of her enjoyment as stemming from numerous Classics activities such as competitions, creative activities, trips to her teacher's old university and other extra-curricular activities. She comments explicitly that it was 'more like a club than a lesson' and perhaps this added to a feeling of being special.

Although for most, this sense of belonging to a community is associated with their school experience of Classics, for Pippa it is very much associated with school in general, rather than Classics, and has also been influential in her decision to teach. She has always 'enjoyed the community that a school has' and although teaching was not

consciously an early decision for her, this sense of community has perhaps contributed to her view, looking back, of teaching: 'it's always seemed like the really obvious choice for me, as an instinct'. A year into her career, during Pippa's second interview, she feels the same about her first post: 'this place is such a community'. She relates this, logically, partly to the boarding system. This sense of community, however, appears to add to the sense of responsibility she feels as a teacher, which, again understandably, she feels even more strongly now she is in post. Although that accountability and responsibility may be 'daunting', as she notes in her first interview, there does appear to be compensation in that 'it's really nice to be needed, to wake up every day and be 'about' something'. Although a rather abstract statement, it appears that a number of the participants may have been conscious of a desire for a particular type of career, with responsibility and to be 'about something'. What is involved in that will be discussed below but, as noted, the sense of community appears to have relied on the close relationships established in the participants' most positive experiences and the importance of the interpersonal will be considered next.

#### **4.2.6 The interpersonal**

The overall impression from the respondents' positive memories of Classics teaching and good teaching generally, is that this stemmed from situations where teachers knew their students well. This impression seems also to be emphasised in discussing their general notions of good teaching and teachers, and is explicitly noted by some as an attraction of teaching as a career. Pippa sums it up succinctly: 'the most important thing, I've realised, is being personal and some of the things I love about Classics and about teaching... it's the human aspect...' and 'everyone's relating to everybody... the connection'. This may well be likely to be true generally of teachers, although perhaps it may be more common in a humanities-type subject such as Classics.

Those who had experience of work before teaching, as Amber, or who had considered other job offers prior to or alongside the offer of a PGCE place tend to emphasise the interpersonal element of teaching as important in their choice. Kate, for example, had considered a career in law and had been offered a place on a law course for the same year as the PGCE but was clear that she chose teaching because she wanted a job which

was 'more people than paperwork'. Louise had returned from abroad for a management consultancy open day when she decided against that area of work, and then considered teaching, rejecting the idea of management consultancy because she wanted a job with people. Tristan also rejected an offer in management consultancy. Hugo is perhaps an exception in that his previous role involved working with people and that element itself was therefore not a particular catalyst in his decision to teach.

Ozzie was clear, at least in his essay at the beginning of his PGCE, that he drew much of his inspiration from his Classics teachers. While he moderates the extent of their influence through the interviews, he nonetheless emphasises the interpersonal aspect of his Classics experiences at school as important in his choice of subject for teaching. He was well qualified to apply for a PGCE in another subject yet was drawn to Classics because of the likelihood of smaller classes in many schools and certainly from GCSE onwards, thus allowing for greater personalisation, the building of strong relationships and a positive atmosphere for learning. He also has a preference, in terms of career ambitions, for the pastoral side, which seems 'more fun' to him because it involves people rather than policies. Once in post for a year, it is still the personal aspect which he finds the most enjoyable, reiterating the attraction of a tutorial-style of teaching 'which really excited me'. Significantly, he also feels, after teaching for a year, that this side of teaching has changed him for the better, 'just by having to deal with more people all day'. Perhaps it is to be anticipated that intending teachers are interested in working with people generally and young people more particularly but not all are explicit about this. Amber is more specific than most of the other participants about wanting work involved with young people. Her three posts prior to embarking on the PGCE were generally connected with young people, even if not always directly and she comments on feeling an affinity for children and young people. She recalls enjoying talking to students, in one of her roles, at an exciting time in their lives, as they entered higher education, which she comments on as 'really interesting and quite exciting'. When asked if there was one tipping point in her decision to teach, she also comments on an event where she was talking to GCSE-level students, 'it was just fun...they were so enthusiastic, and I just thought I want to work with kids in this age group'. She was also, during her earlier roles and her realisation that she could combine the excitement

of working with young people with Classics, specific about teaching being 'much better than sitting around a computer every day'.

Amber is perhaps unusual, as alluded to above, in explicitly citing a desire to work with young people as an influence on her career choice; on the other hand, it may be that the other respondents assume such an element would be implicit in choosing teaching. One needs to be wary of such assumptions, however, given that it only occurred to Louise the day before beginning her PGCE that she had not given much thought to whether she liked children. Fortunately, by the end of her PGCE, she feels she is likely to take a pastoral route in terms of career progression, which she says may be just because she 'like[s] children'. During the second interview, however, she suggests she is more interested in curriculum-based promotion in the long term, although interestingly it is relationships she views as important in her day-to-day teaching: 'when you get that relationship, it's what you dream of'.

Camilla is the only participant to begin the PGCE on graduating but was also partly attracted to the idea of teaching from having worked with two school-age students while at university and having enjoyed 'getting to know the kids really well' and 'watching them see their own progress'; she suggests, like Ozzie, that there are similar opportunities in teaching Classics during her second interview, particularly 'as you go up the years...[with] smaller classes, so it does become more and more like that'. For Camilla, the relationships are also important because, after forty years of teaching it may be that the subject 'become[s] stale' but the 'rapport...will be what gets you through'. While several respondents discuss the opportunities for building positive relationships within smaller groups, Kate is unusual in commenting on her enjoyment of larger classes, where she thinks the interactions are 'more exciting [because] there's more of them'; nonetheless, it is the interactions which appeal.

It may be no surprise that all but one of the participants enjoyed school overall, in line with the findings of their essays, and tend to highlight the positive relationships with teachers as part of their enjoyment, which may contribute to the attraction of teaching. Camilla enjoyed school 'immensely' and thoroughly enjoyed her Latin lessons. She does not, however, remember them as creative, and describes them as very different

from how she approaches her own teaching on her PGCE. Nonetheless, she observes that the teacher had a connection with the class and highlights the significance of relationships. Louise also remembers enjoying school, and commented on positive relationships with teachers in her essay, but on reflection does not remember 'great teaching', rather she recalls teachers saying 'let's do the next page of the book – because we *would* all do it'. Nonetheless, she does remember her teachers as committed and going beyond the minimum, giving an example of them marking extra work she had completed voluntarily and taking lessons outside school hours. Again, perhaps this indicates a view of teachers as 'caring' and fits into the interpersonal element, which seems to be noted in several contexts. Ginny comments on the caring side of the profession, which she noticed from GCSE onwards, in her Latin teachers: 'they really seemed like they cared about each of us, and I think that made a big difference'.

The caring extends to the subject, as well as the students. Kate describes her Latin teacher as eccentric but quite traditional, implying that the former was a positive but the latter not necessarily ideal pedagogically. Most importantly, however, her teacher appeared to care about the subject, whereas most of her other teachers appeared to care more, in her view, about examination passes, and this unusual (in her experience) approach contributed to her enjoyment of her Latin lessons. Again, perhaps this resonates with the importance of the interpersonal element of teaching; caring about the subject in itself may not be a pre-requisite for caring about the individuals but it is possible that it relates to a desire to enthuse and engage others with the subject, which may be linked to the interpersonal element and an altruistic approach. In contrast with others, Willow, as already discussed, did not enjoy school and 'felt really neglected, almost'. She does recall one teacher, however, who 'supported every individual one of us'. Certainly the overall impression from the positive memories of teaching is that enjoyment often came from teachers knowing their students well, again, highlighting the importance of the interpersonal in teaching.

Looking ahead to their aspirations in teaching, all participants emphasise the importance of the interpersonal in discussing what might constitute good teaching, which might relate to their expectations of the career, and therefore their desire to



embark upon it. They comment on qualities such as empathy, relating to students' needs, having a connection and an interest, again unsurprising given those were qualities some remembered from school. Ginny is perhaps unusual in noting similar qualities, giving personal attention, getting to know the students, as important but observing that she would not have considered this before embarking on the PGCE and would have assumed that passion and enthusiasm are the all-important characteristics. Adrienne similarly comments in the second interview that she now thinks 'the main thing is probably the relationship with the kids... then everything else falls into place'. Willow also notes empathy and enthusiasm as the two most important elements of good teaching. Tristan finds it difficult, understandably, to outline a particular model of a good teacher but gives an example of one with whom he worked, who 'genuinely cared' and suggesting 'actually wanting people to do well' and 'being interested in kids as people' as elements of good teaching. Helen expands on the idea of a good teacher being interested in students as 'someone who can relate to the students' needs...someone who can inspire the students... There's a sort of question of a kind of presence, I think, as well'. This notion of a presence is difficult to define but also implied by Ozzie, who comments on teachers' 'charisma...', they instantly engage... They care about the children and the children know that'. Joey puts it simply as '*knowing your students*'.

While there is an emphasis on building relationships and offering opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential, highlighting altruistic and intrinsic elements of the job of teaching, for some of the participants a desire for a 'career' is conveyed as relatively important, suggesting an extrinsic element.

#### **4.2.7 A 'career'?**

Several of the participants convey a desire for a 'career' but, once again, the elements of a career are conveyed differently by individuals. Those who were not explicit about their desire for a 'career' often implied a preference for elements which might be included in a definition, such as responsibility, the ability to influence and lead others or a job with a clear framework for progression.

Joey had been teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), partly as preparation for teaching generally but commented that he did not see TEFL as a 'career'; he clarified this during the second interview as lacking progression, both in terms of role and pay, perhaps implying a desire for a career with potential for progression in terms of responsibility and financial rewards. On the other hand, he is not especially concerned with career progression at this early stage of his career, and his view on this is similar towards the end of his training and at the end of his first year in post. Perhaps what teaching Classics offers him, in contrast to TEFL, is greater security, although he is not explicit in this. For Tristan, however, this is a clearer attraction. He had applied for teaching jobs in independent schools prior to beginning the PGCE, assuming he would not need a teaching qualification, and appears to have a preference for teaching in the independent sector, although educated in a non-selective state school. This preference he expresses as representing greater job security, although this may in fact reflect his experience and observations of Classics while attending a state school. It might also be the case that, as his mother teaches in the state sector, he is aware of the stresses it can bring, which he rightly or wrongly associates with that sector. For Pippa, in contrast with Tristan's initial intention to teach without undertaking a PGCE, it was important to take on a role which required further training, something which requires that people 'go out of their way to train' and therefore which 'not any old Tom, Dick or Harry can do'. She adds that she is an exception in her family in having completed qualifications beyond a certain level, and there is a sense of satisfaction conveyed in that. There might be, within her view of a career, a sense of status but she also comments, in relation to career aspirations, that she is 'not competitive... I like the idea of just being a teacher' and that she is not really concerned with money, implying that status, in terms of responsibility or money, is not important. In contrast with Pippa's and Joey's future aspirations, Louise comments, in the second interview, on her generally competitive nature and perhaps this is reflected in her decision to teach, which began with the thought of being 'in charge of a school', as will be discussed below.

For Adrienne, who also initially aspires to headship, 'the respect you get for being a good teacher, I think, is pretty priceless', perhaps implying an attraction to a career which is generally respected. Pippa also comments on respect for teaching as a career and she observes that people she encounters think of it as 'a noble career', although she

does go on to say that the reality is 'not quite like that'. On the other hand, she is more evidently aware of the sense of responsibility which accompanies such a career, which, as already noted, she finds 'daunting'. Perhaps ironically, since her experiences seem to be more extreme in lacking inspirational role models compared with others, Willow finds that people's responses to her training to be a teacher are positive and also reflect a respect for teaching. Although she expresses this in response to a general question, she does highlight this response as an attraction of teaching: 'I get a positive reaction and that's something that makes me attracted to it as well... It's a career and people respect it and know what it is, it does attract you'. Interestingly, she also comments on her father's lack of esteem for teachers and for Classical subjects but this seems to be exceptional in her experience. Although discussed in relation to people's responses after entering training, the positive opinion of teachers seems to be expressed by her as an unsurprising and generally held view. It might also imply a desire for a 'career' and therefore for something with status which people respect, which might be related to aspects of teaching, and of Classics, already discussed above. Willow is also dismissive of her father's view, which, she feels is not particularly supportive of teaching; he would prefer her to have gone into a different career, perhaps in the city: 'he thinks you should aim for money and status...', implying that teaching is not, in fact, a high status career, although she has found that it is one which is respected. Her views on the status and perception of teaching Classics, as opposed to teaching, have already been discussed. Willow herself, in response to career ambitions, does not seem preoccupied with status, and has no particular plans, at the end of her PGCE, and one year on, in relation to climbing the career ladder.

In other cases, an expressed desire for a job with influence may imply a desire for a 'career', with status and responsibility, as noted. In some cases, an interest in the ability to influence is conveyed with a more explicit element of wanting to be a leader. Camilla, for example, tends to fall into the dominant role if no one else fills it and observes that she 'quite like[s] being a leader of things'. Louise also admits that she enjoys being in charge, as well as enjoying the fact that teaching involves being with people; she and Camilla initially aspire to headship, which may not be unusual at this very early stage of their career; Louise, in fact, admits that her first thought of teaching was that she would like to be a head teacher before light-heartedly realising this would

require her to 'do some teaching' first. However, at the point where she is about to begin her first post, she does acknowledge that she may not want to move away from the classroom, which is likely to be necessary for headship. Louise, Camilla and Adrienne, who all mentioned headship during their first interviews, have slightly modified their thoughts once in post but such modifications will be discussed later in relation to the participants' developing views over the course of the research. When Adrienne envisages becoming a head, she describes this in terms of wanting to lead people, having a vision and leading others in it. She adds, however, that one advantage of being a head would be her ability to influence the place of Classics within a school, as she has seen how important the leadership team can be in that respect. She reiterates the significance of this aspect in her second interview, by which time she has begun an MA in education. She is exceptional in the group in embarking on this at such an early stage and she cites several influences in her decision to undertake the course; she comments, among other things, on having seen the practical impact of other colleagues' research in her school and implies that she would like her own research to be taken on, again suggesting a desire to influence.

Adrienne appears to have the most developed view of her career; she comments, in the second interview, on her desire to mentor trainee teachers in the future, both in order to gain fresh ideas but also 'to try and pass down from experience', again suggesting a desire for leadership and influence. Hers is not a self-centred view, however; she also notes the importance of involving others when leading and hers is a collegiate view of leadership, perhaps contributing to the importance of the interpersonal elements of teaching. These elements appear to be characteristic of Adrienne generally. She recalls, for example, her 'happiest moment' as a pupil as being elected head girl, thus demonstrating her leadership qualities and her enjoyment of, and pride in, leadership roles from an early age. This may stem from her inherent qualities but may also be influenced by her family, who would have been disappointed if she 'hadn't ended up in a profession'. Understandably, she sees this as a question of her parents wanting their children 'to do better than they did... it would have been the step up to do some sort of profession'. In relation to this, she does highlight her mother as influential on her approach generally: 'I think we all get our drive from my mum'.

Amber also felt her parents 'certainly' expected her to have a career, in particular her mother, and again this may be influenced by her mother's own educational path, which Amber suggests was not what she would have wanted, and wanting more for her daughter. Although a gendered view in her case, for two others there is also a sense in which their parents would have been disappointed had they not pursued their education further and achieved 'more' in academic terms than they had, leaving school at fifteen or sixteen. While it may not be surprising that parental wishes play a part in choices made, they might not always be followed; Willow, for example, felt it was not expected that she attend university; it was not something her parents had done and if anything she feels they, or certainly her father, expected her to leave school and go directly into employment. Kate also made her own decisions in the context of her parental wishes, turning down her place at law school in favour of the PGCE, although her parents had been keen for her to go into law, particularly her mother, who had wanted to pursue that path herself when younger.

Returning to the aspiration to headship, it might also be considered that such an aspiration may be linked with a desire for status, as well as an ability to influence and inspire others. Tristan, in discussing his career ambitions as he finishes his PGCE, suggests he would be looking for promotion within three years and that, in the longer term: 'Head would be quite nice, in the sense that you were a head but is it worth it?', appearing to imply that the status of headship might be quite attractive, although not necessarily the demands of the role itself. On the other hand, by the time of the second interview, he is 'happy doing what I'm doing', partly because he thinks 'there's plenty of time'. Ozzie's comment during the first interview, that he would be 'disappointed' if he remained a classroom teacher, might also imply that career progression and status are also important to him. Like Tristan, he views the idea of headship as a conflict for him, in that the role appeals but 'they seem to work very hard', which seems less attractive. Both appear attracted to the hypothetical notion of headship but perhaps less so the practicalities.

Although Joey is unusual in having considered teaching from the age of around eleven, his embarrassment when asked about his aspirations at school, aged fourteen, might reflect what he saw as a negative perception of teaching, at least among his peers: 'I

think I was perhaps a little bit embarrassed to admit that in front of the other two [students] at the time'. This might also relate to others in his school aspiring to more 'acceptable' careers such as in law or medicine. This, he suggests, may have been related to their parents' careers, whereas he came from a family where no-one had previously attended university. On the other hand, perhaps in contrast to Ginny, Hugo and Amber this embarrassment did not dissuade him from pursuing teaching as a career at any point. Although Amber had considered teaching as something some of her peers fell into, as already discussed, a situation she wanted to avoid as 'the worst idea', once she had decided on teaching, she seems specifically to discard any importance of the notion of a 'career' and views teaching as quite different from that notion:

because it's not for a job...that's what I enjoy, and what I want to do...Whereas most people I speak to seem to look at education and university and what they do as a means to making money, and a means to having a career that they can sort of identify as a particular career.

Although there seem to be elements of career aspirations expressed by several of the participants, they do not all convey the impression of being highly ambitious, although, as noted, a few have headship as a long-term ambition. Although most have an idea of a preferred position of responsibility as they reach the end of their training, several either 'downgrade' their aspirations, as one explains, after a year in teaching, or have altered their path, mostly preferring curriculum promotion rather than a pastoral responsibility. Rather than 'downgrading', however, they convey the sense of enjoying their current role and not thinking too far ahead at this stage, with the exception of Ozzie, who cannot envisage remaining a classroom teacher for thirty or more years but also finds it difficult to envisage a senior management role. He is the only participant who foresees possibly leaving teaching at some point, although he does point out it is something to which he can return. While Amber and Adrienne initially mention an interest in museum education, by the time of the second interview, they, along with the others, remain committed to teaching, and with the exception of Ozzie, appear even more so than at the end of their PGCE. The participants' views on the specifics of a 'career', both in terms of their original aspirations and of their future ambitions one year into teaching, appear to be quite mixed.

#### **4.2.8 Key moments**

Some of the above has touched upon what, for some of the participants, appear to be key moments in their decisions to teach, or not to teach at that particular time. The loss of a parent has been noted, and in particular the loss at a young age. Although one of the reasons Ginny rejected teaching on graduating was that it was 'more of a grown up job' than one for a twenty-one year old, something also mentioned by Louise and Willow, it was while dissatisfied with her job that her friends asked her what she would prefer to do and 'teach' was her instinctive reply. It was at the point when one of them asked why she did not simply apply in that case that she realised this was what she needed to do. It is perhaps also significant that she spoke to her ex-tutor at university about applying for teaching at this point, who conveyed to her the words of another of her tutors, who sadly passed away, words also conveyed in his reference for her application: 'She should go into teaching. She knows it herself but won't admit it. She's a natural.' Ginny suggests they did indeed know her better than she knew herself. Although not in itself representing a key influence, it perhaps acted as confirmation, to the extent that 'it was a big encouraging factor'.

Less dramatic but equally significant, seemingly, in his choice, was the moment when Joey's teachers spoke to him about attending the grammar school, a decision which is also significant in introducing him to Classics. Although he is certain he would have become a teacher had he attended the non-selective school, it appears that this turning point is significant in leading him to Classics teaching. Another respondent, Kate, also experienced a chance turning point, having fallen into a summer teaching role abroad purely as the simplest means to travel and this positive experience prompted her to consider teaching as a career, which she had not previously done. Tristan and Louise might be included as having minor moments of epiphany in deciding on teaching. Both comment on making their decisions 'out of nowhere' when confronted with other potential careers, deciding upon teaching in preference to those. Of course it is impossible to gauge to what extent the decisions were completely 'out of nowhere' and, as has been mentioned, Tristan's family has a teaching background, with his mother still in teaching and his father having had ambitions to become a teacher. Ozzie is

unusual and perhaps the closest participant in the current study who could be considered as having taken a fallback position in that he applied for the PGCE along with another role simultaneously, with the latter failing to materialise. Nevertheless, he had teaching in mind, along with other potential options, from sixth-form; on the other hand, although he is clear teaching had been in his mind for some time, it is the failure to secure that route which resulted in the choice being made at that particular point in his life.

The participants all came to teaching at different times, via different routes. For some such as Amber, there was gradual realisation, a crystallisation of elements; for others, as noted above, there was a significant prompt or moment; for a few, teaching had always been in the background. However they came to make their career choice, once they had made it, the choice then seemed obvious. For many, their expectations and perceptions of teaching change remarkably little over the course of the two years.

The next chapter brings together the findings from the data sets and discusses them in relation to previous research.



## 5 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a consideration of the findings of this research project, beginning with a brief summary of the key findings. The following section proceeds with a discussion of those findings and the extent to which they relate to previous research as noted in the literature. Strengths and weaknesses of the study are then addressed. The chapter ends with potential practical implications and suggestions for further research.

### 5.1 Summary of the findings

The essays and interviews suggest a myriad of reasons for choosing teaching Classics as a career. It was evident in the participants' essays that most of them had enjoyed their time at school, as is perhaps more common for those choosing teaching (Younger et al., 2004: 248). Nonetheless they are not necessarily wholehearted in their praise of their schools and all report aspects which, if not experienced negatively by them at the time, were potential areas for criticism. Most of these respondents would not fit into the category of counter-identifiers, noted occasionally in the literature, in relation to this aspect of their motivation (Lortie, 1975: 46; Malderez et al., 2007: 233). The participants, for the most part, fitted in with the demands of their schools but were aware that the circumstances in which they were successful were not necessarily conducive to success and positive experiences for others. Generally, these circumstances relate to aspects of inequity such as teachers' or a school's lack of support for lower achievers or for those students who did not quite fit in to the school's ideals in terms of university or professional aspirations. There is also some criticism in the data, in part related to the above, of an excessive focus on examination results, to the detriment of personal development.

The participants' attachment to their subject is conveyed strongly. Therefore perhaps even less surprising than their overall enjoyment of school are their positive experiences of Classics specifically. However, only half of the essays on their experiences of school highlight specific experiences of their Classics lessons and teachers; nonetheless, where they are mentioned they are occasionally described in terms such as 'inspirational'. Only one of the participants explicitly cites their Classics

teachers, or any teacher, as the main inspiration for choosing teaching as a career, conforming to the teacher role models noted (O'Sullivan et al., 2009: 183); even in this case the influence was attributed a much lower profile on subsequent probing in interview. It may be perhaps somewhat surprising, then, that many of the participants fail to highlight their Classics lessons in describing their school experiences in the essays, particularly given the focus on the importance of the subject in many of the interviews. Generally it appears that Classics teachers were significant in the respondents' enjoyment of Classical subjects at school but less specifically so, at least in their presentation of their influences, in terms of their career choices.

As mentioned above, for most of the participants, the role of their subject is significant in their choice of career, as has been found in other studies (Hammond, 2002; Younger et al., 2004); in many cases this stems from a view of Classics as occupying a relatively minor, but therefore unusual, place in UK education, which they are keen to expand. For some, there is a link between their desire to teach and their desire to teach *Classics*, expressed clearly in the interviews, and almost all are clear that they would not have chosen teaching were it not *Classics* teaching. Overall, the findings reveal a sense of a 'mission', to maintain and increase the provision of Classical subjects for the next generation of school children. For some, this mission is bound up with their own intellectual attachment to the subject. For a few, this influence relates specifically to equality of opportunity and the fact that a much smaller percentage of state schools offer Classics compared with independent schools. However, during the course of the research, the 'comprehensive ideal' and the drive to ensure opportunities for all within that particular context perhaps become somewhat tempered.

Most of the respondents express their affinity for the subject, during the interviews, as related in some way to an intrinsic 'special' quality (cf. Hammond, 2002: 137). This perspective appears to have a variety of origins, according to the findings, partly related to the 'niche' view of Classics mentioned above, partly because the participants simply feel that the subject has a great deal to offer and is not currently exploited to its fullest, and partly related to the intimate feel they associate with learning Classics, related to smaller classes and greater personalisation. For some, an attraction of teaching is the opportunity to maintain their own engagement with this 'special'

subject. As suggested in their essays on their own experiences of school, this attraction itself has a variety of origins; for a few they pre-date their school experiences of Classical subjects, for most of the others the attraction began relatively instantaneously at school. However there appears to be more to this 'specialness' than enjoyment and the relative scarcity of Classics in the education system.

There is an indication of Classics as a marker for difference, and once again, this stems from a variety of perspectives. Some viewed Latin, during their school days, as intellectually challenging, in contrast with some of their other subjects, and gained enjoyment and confidence from their success in what was perceived as a relatively difficult subject. An awareness of Latin as perceived by others as challenging also contributed, to a certain extent, to Latin and Classical subjects as a marker for difference. This aspect was also supported for most by an awareness of Classics as subjects which were not studied by everyone, either within their school or in all schools. While not everyone perceived the subjects in this way while at school, most articulate this view by the time of the second interview and use this perspective to promote Classical subjects as challenging and/or a marker for difference in their schools. The challenging or unusual aspect of Classical subjects also appears to contribute, for a few respondents, to a sense of raised status. Not only were Classical subjects viewed by some as unusual generally, they were aware that not everybody found them easy, even within highly selective schools; class sizes were often small and, in addition, they seemed to provide access to the 'best' universities; thus the perception or promotion of Classics as a marker for difference occupies a potentially conflicting position in relation to the 'mission' to ensure Classical subjects are more widely taught. Although it might follow, from a view of Classics as 'special', that teaching Classics may be viewed as special in a similar way, it is not always the case in this study. Some of the respondents initially laid aside thoughts of teaching as a career, viewing it as a less exciting or more predictable option than other careers, although they did not necessarily articulate this in terms of teaching as a low-status 'semi-profession' (Hoyle, 2001: 140; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003: 583); four of the group appeared to hold the view, around the time of graduating, that teaching might be too predictable a path for Classics graduates.

Reflecting on the respondents' comments on developing young people beyond examination preparation, and the generally positive recollections of their Classics teaching while at school, it may not be surprising that most of the group conveyed a sense of a community in their earlier experiences of Classics. Many recognised that this was in part due to their small class sizes allowing for more personalisation and positive relationships. The 'human aspect' of teaching and Classics teaching is noted as an attractor for many and again, perhaps it is not surprising that those entering teaching are drawn to a career working with people (Huberman, 1993: 115). A personalised approach and strong relationships are also highlighted in describing teaching generally, in the participants' recollections of school, and contribute to their descriptions of what constitutes effective teaching.

Some of the participants articulated preferences which suggest that a job with responsibility, with a clear structure and viewed with respect by others is relatively important to them in terms of career choice. For some, the sense of responsibility accompanying teaching aligns with their natural leadership qualities and, at least at the earlier stages of the study, with a sense of ambition, or at least the recognition of a potential career path in teaching. Perhaps it is to be expected that individuals who succeed at school and university are likely to be relatively ambitious in their view of careers, although this is not universally the case in the current study.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that the participants generally view themselves as involved in passing on the 'Classical baton' and offering a particular set of experiences and opportunities to young people; contributing to this, unsurprisingly, are their prior experiences and, in some cases, significant moments or individuals. Whether influenced positively or negatively by these, the participants have formed a desire to contribute to the education of the next generation. That desire appears to be almost inextricably linked, for many, to their subject.

## **5.2 Interpretation of key themes**

As already noted, there have been a number of studies on teachers and the influences on their choice of teaching as a career (for example, Cockburn & Haydn, 2004; Krečič & Grmek, 2005; Manuel & Hughes, 2006). While the literature appears to outline broadly similar reasons for choosing to teach, the emphases and detail may differ. In addition, studies have differed not only in their approach but also in the selection of respondents, with some addressing a range of serving teachers' views (Huberman, 1993), others exploring undergraduates' or trainee teachers' influences (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Reid & Caudwell, 1997) and a few looking at more specific groups such as a particular sector or subject (Eick, 2002; Jenkins, 1998). Nonetheless, the studies have tended to categorise motivations to teach as falling into altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with the clearest distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It perhaps comes as no surprise that, in the current study, the first two categories dominate, in particular aspects of intrinsic motivation, and that extrinsic factors play a smaller part in individuals' decisions to enter teaching. As has been noted, intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivations can be difficult to separate in exploring the influences on career choice; in addition aspects such as wishing to make a contribution to society, which might appear altruistic, may also include aspects of self-actualisation, which might be classed as intrinsically motivated attractors for teaching (Krečič & Grmek, 2005: 265).

### **5.2.1 Passing the baton**

As observed above, training to teach Classics appears to be something of a 'mission'; this could be considered as falling into the altruistic motives commonly outlined in the literature (for example, Pop & Turner, 2009: 695). While some of the motives for teaching commonly cited in the literature such as a desire 'to play a useful social role in society' (Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999: 70) are rarely articulated explicitly in this study, the participants do appear to view their role in teaching as offering opportunities to young people and they express the importance of contributing to their personal development. However such potentially altruistic influences in the choice of teaching may also fulfil psychological needs for the individual, thus blurring the distinction between altruistic and intrinsic motivation. In addition, the importance of

offering subjects such as Classics in schools might also suggest intrinsic motives inherent in, for example, a wish to maintain the provision of the subject with which they have engaged at university level (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000: 125). Therefore, the roots of this mission and the expression of it, as might be expected, vary from individual to individual. An overarching theme, however, appears to be that training to teach and teaching Classics positions the research respondents within a cycle in which they express a responsibility, almost a duty, to 'pass on the baton', and in particular the 'Classical baton'. One fundamental element of this is the possibility of offering opportunities to children and young people which are similar, in most cases, to those they have experienced themselves. While, as noted above, there is a relatively broad view of these opportunities, in terms of inspiring young people to fulfil their potential, through building their confidence, developing relationships and offering a breadth of experiences. What is conveyed particularly strongly is the importance of the subject and of the interpersonal element of teaching. Nonetheless, there are also specific elements which, although expressed by all, to some extent, vary in their articulation and the significance attributed to them.

### **5.2.2 Preserving and expanding Classics provision**

Clearly teaching Classics is conveyed as being important for all participants, as one might expect from a group of PGCE students, subsequently Newly Qualified Teachers, but for some this relates specifically to the minority position held by Classical subjects on the curriculum. Interestingly, its position as outside the national curriculum appears, if anything, to be a positive influence, contrary to the suggestion of Coulthard & Kyriacou (2002: 44). For three respondents, for example, this position represents an imbalance on the curriculum, with regard to the relative paucity of state schools offering Classical subjects compared with schools in the independent sector. Two of these three expressed this overtly as a political stance and their initial ambitions are very much linked to teaching Classics in the state sector. What is interesting, perhaps, in their views is that all three attended schools in which the majority of students paid fees, suggesting such a stance does not necessarily relate to educational background, as others with similar backgrounds hold differing views. Although not reported in the literature, it might have been expected, at the outset of the research, to find that those

who had attended comprehensive schools (a total of three) or grammar schools (a further three) might be more enthusiastic than those attending independent schools (a total of seven) about seeking posts in the state sector. On the other hand, the complex networks of influences are likely to impact on individuals in a variety of ways, as appears to have been the case in this particular study, and as has been found in previous studies (for example, Jenkins, 1998: 879). Furthermore, a hypothetical ambition to teach Classics in a comprehensive is subject to the pragmatics of actual posts on offer, location, and selection for the post. While in practice only one participant went on to teach in a comprehensive, what is interesting to note is that most of the remaining participants conveyed the impression, at least at the point of finishing their PGCE, that they were not fixed to one type of school, regardless of the posts they were about to take up. They are a little less open after a year in post and their developing views will be discussed in a later section. Their earlier flexibility in this respect, of course, may well have been contingent on their perceptions of appropriate responses as they reached the conclusion of their state-funded PGCE. In addition, it may also have been related to the relationship between respondents and researcher; the potential impact of this on the research will be discussed in addressing weaknesses of the study.

### **5.2.3 Preserving the system?**

Huberman (1993: 118) had noted teachers whose enjoyment of and feeling comfortable in school contributed to their choice of teaching as a career. Similarly, Lortie (1975) had observed that those entering the school system as teachers might wish to preserve the system they had experienced. It would not be surprising if this were true in some instances in the twenty-first century; the current study, however, might suggest that this is not necessarily the case, given the wishes noted above in relation to school systems. More generally, although most of the participants recalled positive memories of their own experiences, they were aware of potential criticisms of their schools. Interestingly, the participants include one counter-identifier, noted in the literature as unusual in teaching (Lortie, 1975: 46; Malderez et al., 2007: 233). It may not be so surprising, however, that such individuals may be 'negatively inspired' and wish to 'right' what were perceived as 'wrongs' in their own education (Malderez

et al., 2007: 233) but such teaching candidates appear to be relatively unusual in the literature and in my sample. The counter-identifying participant appears unusual in several ways, including being the sole participant who expresses a desire to teach in the same type of school system in which she was taught. It is difficult to attribute specific reasons for this, other than feeling more comfortable within a familiar system, although it is clearly the case that, for the most part, she was not in fact comfortable within her own secondary school and was quite outspoken in her criticism of her experiences.

In terms of replicating their own positive experiences, however, rather than a specific education system, most of the respondents in the current study tended to comply with the ethos of their secondary schools themselves, 'fitted the mould' and conveyed their experiences as predominantly positive. Although such experiences of school have not been widely cited as a motivational influence on the choice of teaching as a career, rather an influence on the type of teacher they wish to be (Knowles, 1992: 99; See, 2004: 221), it appears likely that they play a part in intending teachers' beliefs about teaching, the value of learning and their own position within the culture of educational institutions. There appears to be a sense in which their self-perceptions, therefore, 'fit in' broadly with what they know of schools and it might be anticipated that this has an effect on how they perceive their potential as teachers. As Malderez et al. (2007) indicated, those intending to become teachers tend to take one of two positions: 'actualising an already identified potential', or 'a transformation of self in order to 'change into' a teacher' (p. 230). It seems, for most of the participants in this study, that the former may be the case.

As discussed above, experiences of school have only occasionally been cited as explicitly motivational in the decision to teach (Younger et al., 2004) and in spite of 'fitting in' and enjoying school, all were aware to some degree of imperfections, suggesting that they viewed some aspects of their schools' approaches as 'not right'; while, with the exception already discussed, they do not express this sense of inequity as a motivation for entering teaching, it may be that it relates to an element of the altruistic in their views of teaching. What could be said of all respondents in this study that there is a desire to replicate the best of their experiences and the participants,



without exception, articulated many positive recollections of their Classics experiences at school. Thus a wish to 'pass on the Classical baton' appears to be an important motivation for most of the participants, with their subject as occupying an important position in their desire to teach.

#### **5.2.4 Classics as special**

As discussed earlier, the profile of Classics as relatively rare on the curriculum and a perception of a 'special' quality appear significant in this respect. This view of Classical subjects perhaps represents an element of the subject-based intrinsic motives observed in the literature (for example, Barmby, 2006: 254; Kyriacou et al., 2003: 261). It is interesting that two of the participants who convey a more limited expression of this element have had what could be perceived as the most 'traditional' educational experiences, in terms of those going on to Classics degrees, having been educated in independent schools in both the primary and secondary phases. Perhaps a 'traditional' educational background is less likely to lead to a perception of Classics as special or unusual. On the other hand, in some cases the view of Classics as like any other subject can be attributed simply to the popularity of the department and subjects, regardless of the setting and traditions of the school. While most participants perceived Classical subjects as special while at school, reasons for the few exceptions can only be speculative since they are not mentioned explicitly; it seems that some were more 'aware' of Latin, and Greek, as available subjects for study from a younger age, although this is not exclusively the case. An example of the difficulty in interpreting influences in isolation is illustrated by the two participants whose parents had studied Classics at degree level each holding quite opposite perceptions of the 'specialness' of Latin while at school.

Overall, however, the views expressed contribute to a sense that one of the main factors in Classics and its 'specialness' is its position as unusual in many schools. It appears that, the more unusual or special the participants perceived Classical subjects to be, the more explicit they are in the sense of a mission in teaching Classics and thus the closer the link between their desire to teach and the desire to teach Classics specifically.

As already observed several studies have noted the importance of the subject in influencing potential secondary school teachers as an element of intrinsic motivation to teach (Huberman, 1993: 115; Dörnyei, 2001: 158; Younger et al., 2004: 248). In relation to the notion of Classics as special, and the sense of a mission in training to teach Classical subjects, those who decided on teaching earlier than others, having teaching in mind while at school, convey a weaker impression of the 'specialness' of Classics and for the two earliest deciders it is clear that the idea of teaching preceded the idea of teaching Classics. Thus, as noted, those who were already aware of a special of quality in Classics when they made their decision to teach tend to convey a stronger link between their desire to teach and their desire to teach Classics, in most cases an inextricable link. What becomes clear, however, is that, by the completion of their first year in teaching, all participants view their subject as special in some way; it would be interesting to explore whether this developing view continues through subsequent years in teaching

#### **5.2.4.1 Classics as a marker for difference**

A potential element of the 'specialness' of Classical subjects may be the experiences of many of the participants of Classics as a marker for difference. All of the participants in this study are clearly high-achieving in terms of academic qualifications, contrary to some of the findings on teachers' qualifications generally (Dolton, 1990: 100). The fact that six are graduates of Oxford or Cambridge suggests they are high-achievers and stood out in some way beyond their qualifications. Although most of the participants are equally well-qualified, perhaps applying for and taking up a place at Oxford or Cambridge suggests a certain level of ambition, an awareness of the requirements to fulfil it and a desire or ability to stand out. As already discussed, relationships, social structures, and context will form complex networks of influences on teachers' lives (Ball et al., 2000: 22) and these will be difficult to isolate. While this may relate to family expectations and influences, with a few having close relatives who also attended Oxford or Cambridge, it is not the case for all the participants and is also likely to be related to their teachers and schools. Whether the influence is family or teacher expectations, and/or a certain knowledge of the discourses of an Oxbridge 'culture', is

difficult to unpack. While such influences are clearly not exclusive to Classics graduates, aspects of a certain status conferred by studying Latin or other Classical subjects are mentioned by some. Although Oxford and Cambridge dropped the previous entry requirement of Latin O-level in the 1960s, it seems that traces of this approach to the universities remain.

Many of the participants who expressed the view of Classics as 'special' comment on 'challenging' or 'clever' aspects of the subject; in some cases this is expressed as academically intrinsic to the subject and it may be that those entering teaching look for intellectual stimulation (Cockburn & Haydn, 2004); in others it may act as an outward signifier, such as the fact that Latin might be associated with access to the 'best' universities, regardless of degree subject. Here the participant with the most explicit view and expressions of both intrinsic and extrinsic 'specialness' represents the clearest example of the possible links between the 'specialness' of Classics and the sense of a mission in choosing to teach and is also the most explicit in terms of an early desire to teach in a comprehensive school. In the same way as a more general special quality inherent in Classical subjects, a sense of status conferred by studying Classics is conveyed as the respondents complete their PGCE, but perhaps comes across more uniformly once the participants have taken up their posts. It is difficult to assess the reasons for a slight shift; as serving teachers, Classicists may often have to 'sell' their subjects to parents and senior leaders in school and Classics as a high-status subject may be particularly appealing to some parents and school leaders. It may also be a function of the expectations and ethos of their schools. Taking a broader view, it may be an aspect of socialisation related to the relatively small world of Classics teaching. With regard to career decision-making, interaction with individuals and within 'social structure and culture' will affect developing views and 'socially constructed... values and norms for action [are taken on] as a natural way of life' (Hodkinson et al., 1996: 148).

Several of the participants note the intellectually challenging nature of Latin as one of the early attractors of the subject for them at school. While this may contribute to the variety of aspects of Classics as special, such as the perception of its status discussed above, it may also be a reflection of the value placed by the respondents on intellectual

challenges, suggested in Cockburn & Haydn's (2004) study as an important career attractor (see also Spear et al., 2000: 51), and challenging situations generally, suggesting the 'stimulating nature of the teacher's role' is indeed an attractor (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 261; see also Moran et al., 2001: 26). In some cases, the participants make this clear in, for example, the challenges of training to teach increasing their determination to succeed; others express indignation over the opinions of some that teaching is not intellectually demanding. The latter is in line with Ashby et al. (2004) who suggest that long-term commitment may be related to a view of teaching as intellectually demanding (p. 4). It is interesting, however, to note to what extent the status of Classics as an intellectual marker for difference is counterbalanced for some by teaching Classics being seen as 'easier' than teaching some other subjects.

### **5.2.5 Intellectual challenges versus the challenges of teaching?**

The desire for a challenge is not explicitly reported by all respondents, however; for example in one case, a parent's view that state school teaching is overly demanding only increases her wish to take up this type of position, while in another case such challenges appear to contribute to the respondent's preference for an independent school post. Once in post, however, those in independent schools appear to perceive their teaching lives as 'easier', practically if not necessarily intellectually, than for those in the state sector. Some of those in grammar schools convey a similar impression in relation to colleagues in comprehensives. Several express this sense almost apologetically and it is unclear whether this stems from their own feeling that they could be challenging themselves to a greater degree or simply reflects their perceptions of *appropriate* responses, in conveying their views of their positions, in particular given the state-funded nature of their training. Two participants express an unmuted preference for some of the 'easier' aspects of their current positions and interestingly convey less of a sense of a 'mission' in teaching Classics than others. In a small study of this type it is difficult to generalise but, interestingly, both are male, and attended the same university; both mention the same early twentieth century novel as representing an attractive picture of the life of a teacher, suggesting, perhaps, a desire for a romantic, idealised version of teaching. (Interestingly, the novel's protagonist finds himself 'sent down' from university, which therefore leads him into teaching.) In

addition, both these respondents held an early aspiration for headship but, by the end of their first year in post, appeared to be less concerned with the career ladder and deterred to a greater extent by the likely demands of such senior roles in schools. This might suggest a desire for an 'easier' life and/or a relative lack of concern with their status in teaching, which will be addressed next.

#### **5.2.6 Teaching and Classics teaching: a question of status?**

Teaching as a profession in the UK has, in recent decades, been perceived as relatively low status (Hoyle, 2001: 140; Ashby et al., 2008: 5; Raggl & Troman, 2008: 588). Its status is therefore likely to have an impact on the perception of teaching as a career choice. Research suggests, in relation to this, that high-achieving graduates, such as those in this study, are less likely to enter teaching than middle or lower-achievers (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2002: 46). In particular Pop & Turner (2009) note research indicating that high-achieving student teachers, whether choosing teaching as their first career or changing career, are concerned with the 'professional status of teachers as a key consideration' (p. 688). It is possible, however, that those entering teaching in the twenty-first century will either be less concerned with status or will at least view teaching as a worthwhile occupation, regardless of whether it is widely regarded as a high status profession. The current study suggests this is the case, although one participant had held an early view of teaching as relatively low status compared with other 'high-flying' occupations. Interestingly, this is a view she later attributes to immaturity at the time, which in itself was a reason she decided against teaching. Therein lies a potential contradiction, that viewing teaching as too 'grown-up' an occupation with a weight of responsibility, a view several held on graduating aged twenty-one or two, might appear at odds with a view of teaching as relatively low status. Again, such views are likely to relate to an individual's age and relative maturity, and, as noted, their identity and self-perception, along with their relationships and the influences thereof. Similarly, two other participants viewed teaching, while at university, as perceived as a 'fallback' and predictable path. This was either in respect of themselves and their options or something which they saw others use in this way, perhaps in line with Lortie's (1975) suggestion that some individuals choose teaching as an alternative to other 'blocked aspirations' (p. 48) suggesting a

slightly lower status perception, of teaching as a 'second choice'. Many of the participants in the current study, however, either chose teaching in preference to other offers, such as well-remunerated management roles in large companies, or had already worked in other areas. It is clear that once the choice has been made, it appears to be a positive choice to opt for teaching rather than a lesser alternative. Perhaps, as might be anticipated, two participants who applied for other options alongside teaching convey a slightly weaker sense of a 'mission' in teaching Classics.

Returning to the question of status, it appears that these teachers may indeed be taking a moral standpoint in their view, or at least their expression of, their view of teaching (Younger et al., 2004: 258); most appear relatively undeterred by any reduced perceptions of the status of teaching and had entered teaching 'with their eyes open' (Coulthard & Kyriacou, 2002: 55), balancing the negative and positive aspects. While there is some expression of teaching as perceived as relatively low in status, most had anticipated it as a challenging career and perhaps this leads to a view of teaching as holding relatively high esteem (Hoyle, 2001: 147). It may be, as Lortie (1975) suggests, that the 'special mission' of teaching affords it a certain status for those choosing the occupation (p. 35). While this view may not be confined to Classics graduates, there is a sense from some of the participants that teaching and teaching Classics specifically are viewed positively by others. It is difficult to know to what extent this is related to the view of Classical subjects as special in themselves. In addition, as one participant points out, any esteem for Classics teachers specifically is not necessarily something of which one would be aware before embarking on the career; nonetheless, as he observes, there appears to be something special about teaching Classics compared with, for example, teaching History. It appears that those who are more explicit in their view of Classics as special from their school experiences are also a little more explicit in how they are perceived as Classics teachers. While this may in part stem from status-related views, it also emerges as a combination of a certain respect for teachers generally in those they meet. This appears contrary to some of their expectations as younger people, and may also relate to the fact that most people they meet outside of school have not previously encountered a Classics teacher, which again highlights the unusual element of any perceived 'specialness' relating to the subject itself.

### 5.2.7 Special or exclusive?

The introduction to this thesis highlighted a view of Classics as élitist and, in contrast with the view of Classical subjects as special, is a sense of frustration for the participants. This is expressed especially strongly by the counter-identifying participant after a year in teaching and is something she views as predominantly the case in the independent sector, in which she works. Rather than viewing Classics as holding any special quality, she feels there is some marginalisation of those who were not educated privately and/or did not attend Oxford or Cambridge. Perhaps it is not surprising that motivation to teach is influenced strongly by a sense of injustice will mean that the teacher will be aware of other potential sources of injustice. Similarly others who had intended, at the start of the PGCE, to teach in the state sector express some sense of frustration with what they perceive as an élitism in views of Classics and Classics teaching and convey a sense of egalitarianism in their approach to Classics and teaching generally, although they do not themselves connect the ‘comprehensive ideal’ with frustrations with any perceived élitist views. In addition, it is interesting that the frustrations are most strongly conveyed by some in the first interview but less so after they have been teaching for a year. Perhaps, in one case, teaching in a comprehensive with a large Classics department and a supportive head teacher means such preconceptions are encountered less frequently. Or perhaps there is a level of acculturation, as already mentioned, which leads to different perceptions once one has entered the world of Classics teaching rather than training within it. All three of these participants, however, have civilisation-based rather than language-based degrees; while these are well-established courses, in the long history of Classics education they may be perceived as relative latecomers compared with ‘traditional’ Classics degrees. This may be a complicating factor in their self-perceptions, their perceptions of the world of Classics teaching and what they feel the perceptions are of them as Classics teachers. It would be interesting to explore whether such issues arise amongst, for example, Geography or History teachers with different types of degrees; this aspect of Classics teaching may be a broader issue for those with civilisation degrees which might be an area for further research.

### 5.2.8 Self-perceptions and previous experiences

Understandably, self-perceptions play a part in career choice and one might expect candidates for a teaching course to feel relatively confident about their ability to stand in front of a class and to work with young people, in 'actualising an already identified potential' (Malderez et al., 2007: 230). Although not necessarily articulated as such, it might be assumed that intending teachers are influenced in their career choice, consciously or otherwise, by considering their potential within teaching. This is not exclusively the case in the current study, however, and two participants might be seen as holding the second position commonly identified by Malderez et al., in anticipating 'a transformation of self in order to 'change into' a teacher' (ibid.). They had initially been concerned that their more reserved nature might be unsuited to teaching but it seems that their reservations were outweighed by what one respondent calls a 'duty' to sustain and extend the provision of Classics in schools. This sense of duty might suggest altruistic motives in the choice of teaching as a career, although that duty is also closely bound up with the subject itself. It is noteworthy that aspects related to a sense of responsibility and to the subject itself appear to have been weighed up and counter-balanced with potential concerns related to self-perception. While it might be anticipated that passion for the subject relates to commitment to teaching that subject (for example, O'Sullivan et al., 2009: 187), there will undoubtedly be complicating factors at work and, for example, in the case of one participant, the perceptions of not 'fitting in', whether related to aspects of perceived élitism or other factors in school, appear to have led to a waning sense of a mission in terms of commitment to Classics teaching. It also appears to be the case that earlier deciders, of which she is an example, convey a marginally weaker sense of the significance the subject.

Previous experience is clearly influential in shaping one's self-perception and the expectations an individual might have of enjoying a particular occupation, that is, its intrinsic attractors; the literature notes job satisfaction as understandably highly influential in career decision-making (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000: 117; Spear et al., 2000: 14; Watt & Richardson, 2005: 480). For those participants who have worked in other fields, such experiences appear to have been influential, not always in the desire to teach per se but in terms of a lack of fulfilment which caused the respondents to re-evaluate their choices and desires. In a slightly different way, the two respondents who



made their choice 'out of nowhere' came to re-evaluate their ambitions when faced with the prospect of other positions. The trainee teacher with the longest employment history is in some ways an exception to this lack of fulfilment, having enjoyed a relatively long and very successful career in an unrelated occupation. Nonetheless, the change of career was also an experience of re-evaluation, following a bereavement. Two other participants commented on the experience of bereavement, at a young age, as influential in leading them to teaching. As in all aspects of life, such 'life-shocks' are likely to lead to the re-evaluation of an individual's current situation and their future ambitions. While periods of re-evaluation are not necessarily linked to particular types of motivation, for the participants in the current study, they appear to have brought a clearer focus on altruistic and intrinsic motives for future choices, which may relate to longer-term commitment to teaching.

Life experiences, as noted, are involved in shaping an individual's nature, self-perceptions and desires. While this is clearly not exclusive to Classics teaching, or indeed the profession in general, one might expect 'teacher-like' experiences to be influential in the desire to teach (Huberman, 1993: 145). In the current study, however, their impact is not uniformly clear. Nonetheless, what emerges is that most participants recall a variety of such experiences, from helping friends and siblings with work to working more formally with school-age children; not all of them cite such experiences as particularly influential on their decision to teach, illustrating the difficulties posed in interpreting studies of this type. Nonetheless, the importance of previous experiences, in particular teaching-type experiences has been indicated in previous research (for example, Younger et al., 2004:248). Although they may not be perceived as significant, these experiences are likely to have an impact on, for example, an individual's confidence in terms of the activity of teaching (Pop & Turner, 2009: 695) and future job satisfaction (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000: 117; Spear et al., 2000:14).

For several participants key moments or 'turning points' (Hodkinson et al., 1996: 101), such as the re-evaluations discussed above, do appear to be explicitly influential in their career choice although they may not be distressing in the manner of the losses already described. The similarity, however, is that the experiences act as a catalyst for

a re-evaluation of an individual's situation. For one, a day spent with school-age children in a previous role is a critical moment in the crystallisation of the decision to teach. The decision to teach will inevitably involve a variety of factors and influences at various points in time. For some participants, the crystallisation process appears more transparent than for others, depending on the point at which they made the decision. Although a critical moment appears key in the decision-making process for many participants, it is in a sense a catalyst, triggering other influences which came together to make teaching Classics a clear choice. For others, however, the key moments appear to stand in isolation, although as already noted it can be difficult to isolate such influences and 'get inside' the decision-making process. For example, one participant making a 'snap' decision comes from a 'pro-teaching' family; thus a decision perceived as emanating 'from nowhere' may not stand in quite such isolation. Again this illustrates some of the difficulties involved in interpreting the significance of such influences as expressed retrospectively; not only can it be difficult to interpret post hoc rationalisations, it is impossible to know how much of a subliminal influence particular factors might represent. Furthermore, such experiences and key moments are likely to occur for numerous teaching candidates in a variety of subjects. As already observed, however, experiences of re-evaluation appear in this study to focus individuals on altruistic and intrinsic motivational factors, often in contrast to the extrinsic attractors of other options. Studies suggest altruistic and intrinsic motives are important factors in longer-term commitment (Ashby et al., 2008: 4) and this may be a consideration for further exploration.

#### **5.2.9 The decision-making process**

The participants perhaps fall into three categories in terms of the decision-making process: those rare few who had decided on teaching while still at school; those for whom the decision to teach, on reflection, appears to have arisen through the gradual crystallisation of a number of factors; those who have had some sort of minor epiphany, through a particular event or a re-evaluation of themselves and their previous or prospective occupation. With the exception of the earliest decider, most of the participants are clear that their desire to teach is closely linked with the subject itself, as has been noted.

The earliest deciders have in common a considered approach to preparation for teacher-training, both in terms of practical undertakings and more abstract research such as prior reading and related activities. It is not clear, for this particular set of trainee teachers, whether this preparation has had an impact on their expectations for training and for their first year as qualified teachers, since they express broadly similar views to others. Although most of those deciding slightly later in life articulated less specific preparation, other experiences, whether in previous occupations or outside, may have contributed to a sense of confidence for this group generally and in their prospects for entering teaching as a career. When considered alongside their perceptions of teaching throughout the study, this perhaps suggests that, whether through preparation or other influences, most participants had relatively realistic expectations of teaching, which remain remarkably unchanged after a year in post. As Ashby et al. (2008) observed, realistic expectations may be important in avoiding disillusionment with teaching (p. 30), although in some respects the participants also hold sustained idealistic views, which will be considered later.

It is also the case that classifying some of the participants as later deciders does not necessarily depict the full story. Although for some the decision to train to teach did not become clear for some time after graduating, a small number had dismissed teaching at an earlier stage. For some a self-perception of immaturity in relation to the responsibility of teaching may be understandable, an observation made in Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant's (2003) study (see also Pop & Turner, 2009); they found that some respondents had felt too young to enter teaching immediately after graduating, even feeling that moving directly into teaching from university was not 'healthy' (p. 104), a sentiment precisely echoed by one of the respondents in the current study.

Clearly some entrants move from graduation to a PGCE; others feel they need time away from studying or simply to grow up; others have not considered teaching before and come to it later, after another career. While some participants made their decisions relatively early, others seem always to have had teaching in the back of their minds and others still made a 'snap' decision; at this stage, there appears to be little

correlation between time taken to enter teaching, the duration of the decision-making process itself, and a candidate's commitment to the profession or enjoyment of it. However, as already observed, the decision-making process is neither transparent, nor, being a process and subject to time, easy to break down.

At either end of the decision-making spectrum, however, are two unusual respondents, in the sense that their choice of teaching as a career is less strongly interlinked with their subject specialism. It appears, nonetheless, that for most of the respondents, regardless of the processes by which they made the decision to teach, it is strongly linked to the subject and, with one exception, came after the participants had been studying Classical subjects for some time.

#### **5.2.10 Family background and the role of significant others**

Although one-third of the participants had given at least some thought to their future career while at school, there is an impression that many did not consider their future in this respect until close to graduation or in some cases afterwards. This may be a generational aspect of career choice or simply not uncommon for graduates; nearly all could be seen as part of Manuel & Hughes's (2006) 'generation Y', born in the 1980s, 'who will apparently change jobs regularly, seek new challenges and fast promotions, and expect high levels of job satisfaction' (p. 12). On the other hand, it may be that family background is an important factor in when such options are prompted and how career prospects are viewed, whether explicitly or in terms of family expectations. For some, it seems that there was an expected educational path extending to university, in which case it might be logical that career considerations may be delayed until that time. A large minority, however, do not have what might be termed 'university backgrounds' in their family, nor in some cases A-level backgrounds. For almost all the participants, however, the expectations were similar regardless of family educational history. There is a slight gender influence in this for some, whose mothers in particular are conveyed as wanting more, educationally, for their daughters, than they themselves experienced.

Again, perhaps this expectational influence is not uncommon and certainly not exclusive to teachers or Classics teachers. Nonetheless it is interesting to note an exception in the study; as observed above, most of the participants felt an expectation, to a greater or lesser degree, that they would take A-levels and attend university. The counter-identifying participant is once again exceptional, having felt, if anything, an opposite expectation, particularly from one parent. The role of significant others is clearly complex.

Although some studies have found significant others to play a part in the motivation to teach (Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Tusin, 1999: 12), according to Kyriacou & Coulthard (2002), those with a teacher in the family were less likely to enter teaching (p. 47; also Spear et al., 2000: 12). In those cases significant others appear to have an explicitly negative impact on individuals' views of teaching (Cockburn & Haydn, 2004: 27; Younger et al., 2004: 249). On the other hand, an example of the potential influence of a 'pro-teaching' family has already been noted. It is therefore not surprising that in the current study those with teachers in their families, in one case a Classics teacher, appear to have been influenced by them in different ways, for example in avoiding teaching for that very reason, or in recognising it as a rewarding occupation. What can be said, however, is that those with parents or other relatives who have taught National Curriculum subjects in comprehensive schools convey a sense in which teaching Classical subjects may be somewhat less arduous than teaching Maths or English, in contrast with the view of teaching as a challenging occupation described earlier. This may affect the extent to which these individuals have not been deterred by their relatives' experiences. Again, there is a slight sense of apology conveyed in this view of their 'less arduous' task of teaching Classics, which will be discussed later.

Although the participants did not expressly cite their relatives as influential in their decision to teach it is likely that 'occupational choices express values which are influenced by parents ... Family encouragement is a powerful recruitment resource' (Lortie, 1975: 44). Situational and contextual factors are also involved in career decision-making (Hodkinson, 1996: 3) and personal circumstances (Lortie, 1975: 40) may lead individuals to choose teaching at different stages and for different reasons (Pop & Turner, 2009: 688f), thus involving the influence of significant others in a

variety of ways. The current study similarly indicates, as one might expect, the interplay between the individual, situational factors, the influences of others and opportunities available and the impact this can have on decisions such as choice of career. What is not clear is that one set of circumstances at any particular stage is likely to lead to a similar outcome for another individual. While the decision to teach is difficult to attribute to particular influences of significant others, several of the participants, though by no means all, mentioned their parents' positive attitudes to Classical subjects and perhaps their influence is more significant in respect of the subject choice than the choice of career.

#### **5.2.11 The importance of relationships**

Another factor which appears to have contributed initially to the participants' enjoyment of Classical subjects and, as they proceeded through school, led them to maintain their engagement with Classics to degree level and thence to teaching, is the emphasis on the relationships established with their teachers. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there are relatively few comments in the study describing Classics teachers as inspirational but the interpersonal aspects of their experiences of Classics are frequently mentioned. It has been noted that early career teachers focus on the 'promotion of positive affect' (Younger et al., 2004: 250), in particular earlier deciders (Lortie, 1975: 38) and it may not be a surprise that those entering teaching value the importance of relationships, the 'humanistic aspects' (Manuel & Hughes, 2008: 18). In line with Lortie's observations, the earliest decider in this study was directly inspired by teachers at primary school. The importance of relationships is nevertheless conveyed by many in their recollections of school and in their perceptions of what constitutes effective teaching, regardless of their positions as earlier or later deciders. All note the impact of relationships with effective teachers on their aspirations in teaching and while this view of the importance of relationships is unlikely to be restricted to Classics, it appears that the nature of the classes and perhaps the smaller departments found in several schools supports this personalised feel more naturally.

Lortie (1975) had found that, in one large-scale survey, the interpersonal element was mentioned as an attractor by more than twice the number of respondents as the subject discipline (p. 28). However the current study suggests that the special quality perceived in Classical subjects while at school is in part connected with the nature of the relationships within classes and with teachers. Those who comment on the specialness of Classics also mention aspects such as a community feel, in some cases likened to a club or a family. Once again illustrating the complex interweaving of influential factors, this is likely to relate to the participants' perceptions both of themselves as Classicists and of the nature of Classics teaching more generally. As observed in Pop & Turner's (2009) study, 'participants viewed and interpreted their decisions through their existing network of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and expectations' (p. 695). It may be that the community feeling referred to contributes, for some, to a sense of 'specialness' in an exclusive manner, both retrospectively and in their expectations of Classics teaching, that is, as an intrinsic attractor.

#### **5.2.12 Developing views**

Trainee teachers' initial expectations of teaching will undoubtedly evolve as they become qualified and progress in the profession. It is therefore important to consider

how such expectations change during the first years of teaching, and the extent to which such expectations impact on the decision to remain in the profession  
(Kyriacou et al., 2003: 262).

The development in views during the transition from intending teachers to training and then to serving teachers may well illuminate potential issues for recruitment and retention and are discussed in the following section.

##### **5.2.12.1 Perceptions of teaching**

The importance of realistic expectations of teaching have been noted as influential in long-term commitment to the profession (Ashby et al., 2008: 30) and for most of the participants, their expectations of teaching were broadly confirmed by their PGCE.

Perhaps this set of respondents is unusual in appearing to have a relatively realistic view of teaching before training. Although a few had worked in schools, most had not but nonetheless felt that their expectations were confirmed by their training experiences. Nonetheless, they commented on expectations also being broadened and, while they anticipated that teaching would be challenging, most found the reality even more demanding than they had expected, as might be anticipated (Lortie, 1975: 65). They knew it would be hard work and found that it was; they anticipated teaching involving a great deal of work and it did; they assumed they would enjoy it and they did; indeed several commented on enjoying it more than they had anticipated. What comes across in their developing views of teaching is that their early views form a blend of realistic and idealised perceptions of teaching. While this might be expected, it is perhaps surprising that the respondents' views, a year later, are relatively untouched by cynicism. They remain pleasantly surprised by elements which struck them during their training, such as the extent of collaboration between colleagues, and a surprising, in their view, lack of cynicism amongst many of their more experienced colleagues.

There are three respects, however, in which the participants' earlier idealism appears to have been moderated. Although the generally optimistic view of their colleagues has been noted, two have been struck by the complex politics of the staffroom, which they had not anticipated. While only two participants mention this aspect, it might be something for consideration during the PGCE. It might also be interesting to explore whether this aspect of teaching is noticed by others in subsequent years as it might be a particular issue in some schools but not others or it might be an almost inevitable aspect of working within an institution such as a school.

Another slight shift in the respondents' own views relates to their increased focus on examination results. On the one hand, results can represent tangible evidence of student success and in this sense it is not surprising that serving teachers, rather than trainee teachers, place more emphasis on this, in particular at the point at which many of their students have recently received their GCSE and A-level results; not only is it a new experience for these Newly Qualified Teachers, they have clearly witnessed a number of successes and their pride in them is perhaps to be expected, suggesting the understandable significance of the 'buzz' of teaching which Hammond observed in his



trainee ICT teachers (2002: 137). Aside from this element of job satisfaction, this focus on exams stands in contrast with the views expressed by many, at the start of the PGCE, in their comments on their own school experiences and the approaches of some of their teacher, as well as their generally expressed desire to work outside exam specifications rather than to be confined within them. An opportunity to revisit their own essays towards the end of the PGCE course might serve as a worthwhile reminder of their early ideals and be a fruitful area for discussion and further data collection.

The third shift, also worthy of future exploration, is that a very small number of the participants appear less clear about whether anything might cause them to leave teaching at any point. Understandably, a few of the female participants mention changes which might stem from starting a family, although they are clear that this would lead them to take a break from teaching rather than to give up entirely. Indeed they suggest that they would take the minimum amount of time away from teaching. There are, however, a few mentions of bureaucratic burdens which might become increasingly frustrating and are expressed as an excessive 'policing' of teachers and teaching; this is generally expressed hypothetically and as a 'necessary evil' rather than a potential deterrent to commitment. While most had anticipated this aspect of teaching as potentially onerous, again, it is perhaps greater than they had expected. Respondents in all types of school are of the opinion that such bureaucracy is more often encountered in the state sector than the independent. It may be that this is an aspect affecting their developing views on schools in which they might seek future posts, which will be discussed next.

#### **5.2.12.2 Future posts: type of school**

Although the respondents continue to articulate a flexibility in terms of future posts during the research, the impression given is that the circumstances of their first year in teaching renders them a little less flexible in their views. Those in independent schools are marginally less open to moving to the state sector, once they have worked for a year, including some who began their training with state sector posts in mind. This is partly because they envisage having to take a cut in salary and partly because they view themselves as having more freedom in their work than their state school

counterparts. While extrinsic motivations such as salary were not given a high profile in terms of attractors to teaching (Lortie, 1975: 102), as already noted (Dolton, 1990: 92; Huberman, 1993: 146) they may be more influential than is evident in such studies and particularly so in relation to job satisfaction and therefore retention after joining the profession.

Others whose views have shifted include two participants working in grammar schools who had originally aspired to posts in comprehensives. If those in independent schools appear to have been influenced by salary and greater freedom in teaching, those in grammar schools appear to be extremely comfortable working with generally high-attaining and well-motivated students (although this is not exclusively the case).

Several participants appear to have become accustomed to certain aspects of their posts, which they feel might not be replicated in a different type of school; they enjoy teaching mainly high-attaining students and feel that they have fewer classroom management issues than might be the case in non-selective schools. As commented upon earlier, there is an underlying sense of apology in their responses to sector-related questions. In some cases it appears that they feel they have an 'easier life' than many state school counterparts, in particular those in other more mainstream subjects. When others comment on their role and the demands of it, they convey a sense that the perception of most people they meet is that they must be doing an admirable and difficult job, as already observed, a 'special mission' (Lortie, 1975: 35); yet most of the participants feel that, in that sense, they cannot be compared with someone who teaches English or Mathematics and they sometimes convey a slight sense of guilt in this respect. It might be the case that they perceive teachers as generally adopting a 'moral high ground' position because of this (Younger et al., 2004: 249), in the face of particular perceptions of teachers and their motivations. Perhaps they feel that, as teachers of Classics, particularly in independent or selective state schools, they do not hold quite the same moral position. Another element already mentioned may be connected with the course; a PGCE is a state-funded course designed to train teachers for that sector; they may also be affected by my role as tutor and my personal history, leading a state-funded course and having taught in non-selective state schools.

As already noted, more participants began their training expressing an intention to teach in comprehensive schools than ended up in those posts. Kyriacou et al. (2003) suggested that the schools in which they train have a strong impact on student teachers (p. 262), and in particular on their future commitment to teaching. It can be quite difficult to ensure all Classics PGCE student teachers are placed in state schools for their training but it appears, in this study, that the first post may have more of an impact on the direction of their future careers than their teaching practice schools. While only those who attended grammar schools mentioned their own school experiences as having an impact on their preference for future posts, the notion of replicating or preserving a school system has been discussed earlier and may be present even if not articulated. While it might be significant both in motivation to teach and in long-term commitment to teaching, it has also been suggested that those who view teaching in this way are less likely to be interested in experiencing new challenges (Lortie, 1975: 30); at this early stage in their careers this does not appear to be the case for the participants in this study. Again, motivation is likely to stem from a complex interweaving of self-perception, significant others and prior experiences.

#### **5.2.12.3 Future posts: type of role**

While most of the participants articulate a general career plan towards the end of their PGCE, these plans have generally altered or appear less ambitious after their first year in post. In many ways this might have been expected since a career path is much more of a reality by this point and the respondents perhaps have more realistic views; the notion of becoming a Head of Department, for example, might also be less attractive after a year spent acclimatising to the occupation of teaching. This transition period, moving from training to teaching has been noted as a 'reality shock' (Ashby et al., 2008: 37) and it is therefore not surprising that views have changed somewhat. Several of the participants are focused on developing their day-to-day work with their students, and classroom teaching is an understandable immediate priority. It appears that, although most have 'downgraded slightly', as one respondent explained, the extent of this is mostly related to their original aspirations. On the other hand, with the exception of two who now feel headship may be rather hard work and therefore less

attractive, those who expressed such ambitions during their training year nonetheless articulate a more driven sense of ambition than those who were not looking too far into the future. If levels of ambition form a continuum, the participants remain similarly positioned in relation to each other one year into teaching and two are about to take up promoted posts in their second year. It therefore appears that those who were most ambitious during their training remain so after a year in teaching. It is also possible that the general 'downgrading' expressed by most of the participants, after their first year as qualified teachers, stems from a view that they are still learning how to be teachers; while their idealistic views on effective teaching at the beginning of their training tended to focus on the 'promotion of positive affect' (Younger et al., 2004: 250), the more immersed in the reality they have become, the more they are focusing on different aspects of classroom teaching rather than a more hypothetical notion of a career path. Again, this may be an aspect for future consideration; these novice teachers are likely to reach the point where they are comfortable and confident in their classroom teaching at different stages and it may only be at this point that they come to consider the next career step, be it taking on further responsibility or deciding against doing so.

In spite of the significance attributed earlier to the interpersonal element of teaching and teaching Classics, there appears to be a dichotomy between pastoral roles such as Head of Year and more academic roles such as Head of Department; the need to pursue a more evidently intellectual route appears to take precedence for many of these participants at this stage. Again this may relate to an earlier focus on 'affect' being overtaken by other aspects of teaching, but it may also be connected with their interest in the intellectual side of teaching, and of Classics, as discussed above. In addition, since there is a strong link for most between deciding to teach and teaching Classics, it might be expected that the participants who are considering promoted posts in the near future have a preference for curriculum-based promotion. While this is not restricted to teachers of Classics, it may be that the stronger links with their subject, in terms of motivation, make this view more likely.

#### **5.2.12.4 Approach to salary**

Although it has already been observed that few people enter teaching for its pecuniary rewards, or at least express such extrinsic factors in their motivation, it may be that 'the material rewards do make a difference and, particularly in the long term, will influence their commitment' (Huberman, 1993: 146). While a few of the participants in the current study associate taking on further responsibility with increased salary, most remain relatively satisfied with the material rewards of teaching. Nonetheless, there is a slight shift in this aspect towards a greater recognition that salaries are undervalued compared with the responsibility and demands of teaching and compared with other occupations. Even those who expressed themselves as 'lucky' in that salary was not a prime concern appear, after a year on a teacher's salary, to express a greater sense of injustice in considering the material rewards, in particular those working in state maintained schools. Although the participants may have been strongly influenced by altruistic and intrinsic motivations, it may be that, once in teaching, the extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions have an increasing impact on teachers' long-term commitment. As Dolton (1990) suggested, individuals consider 'non-pecuniary considerations as well as the pecuniary rewards in making decisions' (p. 92) and this is likely to continue beyond the decision to enter teaching.

#### **5.2.12.5 Summary of developing views**

Although there are slight shifts in views on salary and on future posts, the participants' views on teaching as an occupation and on the qualities of effective teaching remain surprisingly stable. Nonetheless, those who appear to have altered their views on effective teaching tend to have broadened them. They have observed a greater variety of effective styles than they had anticipated, in one case acknowledging that there is no 'set personality'. On the other hand, one respondent feels it unlikely that her views on teaching will ever stay the same and perhaps that is as it should be. Indeed flexibility and openness are characteristics many highlight as important in teaching, along with an ability to continue to learn and develop and therefore constantly evolving views are to be expected. A willingness to adapt, the ability for reflection and creativity are viewed in initial teacher education as important qualities in trainee teachers and it would be interesting to explore whether these qualities, which appear to be

demonstrated in the many of the participants' developing views, continue to be in evidence as they progress in teaching.

### **5.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the study**

Any research project is susceptible to questions of authenticity, and generalisability. Possible strengths and weaknesses are likely to lie in the sample itself, the researcher, including the relationship between the researcher and the participants, and the research instruments, such as the interview schedules and these will be discussed below.

#### **5.3.1 The sample**

A strength of the sample, is that, although a small group, all participants completed the course, remained in the study and to date remain in teaching. However, while representing half of those Classicists trained on PGCEs in England in the academic year in question, the participants nonetheless form a small sample. While they represent half of all PGCE students in Classics in one academic year, their small number inevitably renders them a unique sample and thus it may be impossible to generalise. Nonetheless, with any sample, and in particular a small one, it may be difficult to assess to what extent circumstances arise by chance, which they inevitably do, or are related to factors such as age, gender or socio-economic background.

While it is clearly difficult to make generalisations from a small cohort of students, who then become Newly Qualified Teachers, they are in several respects representative of previous and subsequent cohorts in my experience. They are all well-qualified, most have had some work experience since graduation and they have taken up posts in a variety of schools, as is often the case. They are mixed in gender and ages, although almost all are in their twenties and therefore the age range is more limited than in some cohorts. While several do not come from 'traditional middle-class' backgrounds, it might be argued that attending a Russell Group university and taking a degree in a subject such as Classics renders them 'traditional' in an educational sense and counter-balances other factors such as educational path and family background. On the other

hand, they are not representative of minority ethnic groups although this may be a related but broader issue for exploration in terms of those who take up degrees in Classical subjects. This in turn may be related to student intakes to some schools which offer Classical subjects, although this is by no means exclusively the case. While in many ways the sample might be representative of other cohorts, they are also unique in that some cohorts have included a wider range of ages and university backgrounds; while most students identify themselves as 'white British', other groups have included students of mixed heritage (although this information generally comes to light in informal discussions, not in their applicant information) or 'non-white', as well as one or two other European nationals.

In addition, it would be interesting to explore the views of trainee Classics teachers who came to Classical subjects at sixth-form level or later. Although such individuals are relatively few, it is unfortunate that this variable was not present in this sample. Ideally, the other fifty per cent of Classics PGCE students at Cambridge University could have been included in the study but time and practical constraints such as access prevented this and the choice was made to focus on one cohort only. A larger sample would have added a positive dimension to the data but would also have brought complexities such as a different researcher-participant relationship. As a former teacher of Classical subjects, I would inevitably have 'a significant degree of initial proximity' (Hodkinson, 2005: 134) with participants training to teach Classics, alongside the potential benefits of insider research for reflecting the authenticity of the participants' stories. On the other hand, adopting Mercer's (2007) suggestion of an insider/outsider continuum (p. 3), I would have placed myself at a different point on the continuum with each group. The process of researching an unknown set of participants (who might, for example, have included students I had not accepted onto my own course) might have proved problematic in relation to the authenticity of the study. Nonetheless, some questions have been raised which might be explored further with another sample.

### 5.3.2 The researcher and the tutor/tutee relationship

As noted in the methodology chapter, my role as researcher and tutor is likely to act as both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, 'a better initial understanding of the social setting' (Mercer, 2007: 6) will be an advantage and the shared 'internalised language' (Hodkinson, 2005: 137) and broad educational and career choice experiences may well enhance the interviewing process. In a similar study to mine, Drake & Heath (2008), simultaneously acting as EdD tutors while researching the influences and motivation of their students for choosing to study for an EdD, a choice they themselves had made during their careers, found the potential for resonance likely to enhance the authenticity of the study. They refer to Bourdieu in aligning their understanding of the language and conventions of their participants to the advantage of having 'a feel for the game and the hidden rules (Bourdieu, 1988: 27)' (Drake & Heath, 2008: 131).

Conversely, this 'insider' status suggests a potential weakness might be the participants' desire, whether conscious or not, to respond in what they perceive as acceptable ways in discussions with me and in keeping with what they might perceive as 'the dominant thinking within the group' (Hodkinson, 2005: 140). My biography in teaching is relatively wellknown to the participants and it, along with my role as leader of a state-funded training course, may affect what they perceive as expected responses, particularly in relation to their aspirations to teach in the state and independent sectors. While my educational history and subsequent career in teaching might be seen as broadly similar to the educational history and potential career paths of the participants, each of us will inevitably differ and have 'multiple identities' (Wellington & Sikes, 2006: 724) which 'are not unitary, fixed or stable' (Sikes, 2006: 107). In terms of similarities, I might be seen as similar to some of the female participants, having attended a selective girls' grammar school where Latin was not seen as particularly unusual. In common with another of the participants, I decided on teaching as a career while at primary school, before I knew what Latin was. My later affinity for Classics, however, might be seen as different from most of the participants in that, until sixth form, I had intended to become a teacher of Mathematics. My choice of A-level Latin was partly the result of a timetable clash, as it was for Camilla. As discussed earlier, for some of the participants Latin or Classics was a 'marker for difference', whereas in my



case, in common with Pippa, 'difference' was not something I relished at that age. However, I have also noted that the different and 'special' elements of Classics seemed for some to have developed further during their first year in teaching and perhaps this development is something I can see reflected in my career. Teaching French and Classics within the state sector highlighted the precarious position of Classical subjects in schools and added to my own sense of a 'mission' to promote Classics, in common with many of the participants. Thus, following Loxley & Seery (2008), if 'it is not so much the veracity of the 'truth claims' which are important, but who is making them and their ability to legitimise this privileged position' (p. 15), then having experiences in common in terms of educational path, career choice and ultimate subject choice, alongside other biographical details of my own story, might be an advantage, resonating with aspects of individual participants' stories. On the other hand, it is important to remember that all stories are individual, regardless of overlaps in the experiences of becoming a Classics teacher and 'there is a difference between the question of what it is to be *a* bat (a type) and what it is to be *this* bat' (Loxley & Seery, 2008: 8).

Returning to my role as tutor, there will always be an issue related to the 'power and status dynamic' (Cohen et al., 2007: 374; also Kvale, 1996: 126). As noted, some responses suggest there may be an advantage in having, as tutor, already established 'credibility and rapport' (Mercer, 2007: 7) with the respondents and in the number of conversations on teaching held outside the research, whether formal, such as tutorials, or informal, to some extent avoiding 'the disorientating and anxiety-provoking effects of culture shock' (ibid.: 6). Some of the personal details conveyed in the interviews, including, for example, discussions of bereavement, suggest a relatively honest approach for the most part. Similarly the mention of more trivial influences and other comments which do not necessarily comply with the generally perceived altruistic motivations in teaching suggest honesty in their responses. An advantage of my position as tutor is that the research interviews may have a more natural feel than they might with another researcher. Nevertheless, the 'double-edged sword' of insider research suggests the opposite is also possible, with participants withholding information 'for fear of being judged' (ibid.: 7).

In summary, whatever the advantages of this 'insiderness', it is important to bear in mind that the study 'must be based on their concepts not ours' (Loxley & Seery, 2008: 23).

### **5.3.3 The research instruments**

In relation to the essays and interviews, retrospective accounts will always prove problematic. Not only are they subject to my analysis and interpretation, as discussed above in relation to my position as researcher and tutor, the participants themselves are recalling events and influences and re-interpreting them post hoc for the purposes of the study, introducing the 'unknown [of the] reliance on others' memory' (Huberman, 2003: 21) as well as the difficulties in the power dynamic already mentioned. In the case of the essays, they are interpreted for the purposes of the beginning of the course of initial teacher preparation. At that point in the year it may be possible that, with no preconceptions or established relationships, the student teachers are free to be as candid as they wish. On the other hand, they may also feel the need to present certain perspectives. The potential for bias in their view of what they write and how it is interpreted is likely to be equally high for the essays as it is, according to Cohen et al. (2007), in the individuals involved in interviews and in the questions, or in the case of the essay, the question (p. 150).

Similarly, all interactions, whether writing for a tutor or being interviewed, are only 'true' of the moment at which they occur, since there is no one reality 'out there' but several individual realities at different times and in differing contexts (Cresswell, 2007: 20; Drake, 2010: 88). In that sense, this study is a representation of the reality as conveyed by the respondents but not, for example, how their parents, friends or significant others might have expressed the same events, or indeed how they might have expressed them at another time.

The first interview schedule was established in the context of the literature review and in discussions with previous student teachers of Classics. Certain questions, such as those regarding how others responded to the participants and their choice of career, were difficult to interpret since they may depend, for example, on who those 'others'

are. The most mature of the respondents, for example, suggested she may have received a more positive response because of the age and education of those she encounters through friends and family. Certain important features, such as the 'specialness' of Classics emerged during the interview process and were not explicit in the original schedule. One weakness of the process is that I did not press the participants to articulate more fully the aspects of Classical subjects which they felt rendered them special. This might have been due, in part, to our 'shared lens' (Drake, 2010: 86) and an assumption by all, rightly or wrongly, that we shared the same understanding of why this might be, leading to 'questions not asked or information not volunteered' (Hodkinson, 2005: 139; also Mercer, 2007: 6). This might also be related to a communities of practice framework, which will be discussed below, and our joint membership of the community of Classics teachers where practice 'includes both the explicit and the tacit... all the implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle clues, untold rules of thumb' and so on (Wenger, 1998: 47).

The advantage of the second interview was the possibility of cross-referencing and probing such themes which had emerged earlier. Again, this might act both as a strength and a weakness; while it was possible to tailor the second interviews for the respondents to elaborate on the first, in some ways it might have been helpful to have more consistency between the first and second schedule. In addition, in exploring particular issues in some of the second interviews which have arisen through other interviews earlier in the process, the participants may have been led towards some of their responses, again through assuming certain responses were expected of them. Although this potential did not appear to materialise in their responses it is impossible to be certain of that.

The methodological choices within any study will clearly arise from the researcher's own understandings (Drake, 2010: 96) and each presented their own challenges. I chose to base the first part of the research on the participants' essays, written before the course begins and, partly because of this, decided to interview towards the end of the PGCE. There might have been advantages to interviewing earlier, although, as noted above, I felt the relationships established would lead to greater authenticity. In addition, the tutor/tutee role was less intrusive at this stage since all participants had,

by then, fulfilled the assessment requirements of the course and were therefore free to be open about their experiences. In broader terms, I felt that a qualitative study, within an interpretative framework, was best suited to this type of research but it was not without its difficulties. In spite of the positive relationships already established, interviewing itself was a difficult process, dependent as it is on 'rapid interpretation...constant monitoring... the ability of the interviewer to probe, challenge or remain silent' (Drake & Heath, 2008: 131). Therefore, while semi-structured interviews gave the most flexibility for the participants to tell their own stories, they presented difficulties for the same reasons. In addition, analysis of the transcripts presented further challenges in, for example, using the participants' own words while recognising that 'things happen in people's heads during the interview that are not recorded' (Drake, 2010: 91). The process of analysis then gives way to the demands of imposing a framework on the participants' words and attempting not only to represent their experiences but to select their own words in order to do so. Inevitably, much is excluded (Drake, 2010: 96).

## 5.4 The research questions

This study sought to address four research questions:

1. What are the factors influencing the decisions of a cohort of Classics graduates to train to teach?
2. To what extent is the decision to teach a decision to teach *Classics* specifically?
3. To what extent do differences in educational path and background relate to influences on the decision to teach?
4. How do the perceptions of a cohort of pre-service Classics teachers develop over their training and into their first year of teaching?

In relation to the first research question, it appears that, in line with the literature, altruistic and intrinsic motives dominate the choice-making of teaching for these Classics teachers and the influence of a variety of factors is at work in a complex network for each individual. Alongside studies such as that of Reid & Caudwell (1997: 49), there appears, within this small sample, to be little difference in evidence in

relation to gender. It might be expected in a 'caring' profession such as teaching that altruistic motives are prominent, and some studies suggest this is particularly so for women (Acker, 1994). While the participants do not attribute a high profile to their experiences of teacher-like activities, all have experienced such activities, to varying degrees. None recall them with any negativity although they do not articulate them as important. Although a desire to work with children is not specifically mentioned, all appear to value the interpersonal element of teaching and in most cases positive relationships are mentioned in the context of their experiences of Classics while at school.

The study suggests, in respect of the second research question, that the subject and therefore intrinsic motives are at the forefront for most of the participants, regardless of age or gender. On the other hand, it can be difficult to disassociate aspects of the subject, such as its intrinsic importance for these respondents, their desire to share their knowledge of and enthusiasm for it with others and their wish to assist in the development of young people by forming positive relationships, building confidence and offering opportunities to study what they view as a multifaceted subject. The delineation between altruistic and intrinsic motives is not always clear-cut and indeed altruism may also include elements of 'self-esteem and self-efficacy' (Tusin, 1999: 19).

These participants, with one possible exception, appear to have excelled in their education and enjoyed school for the most part. Nonetheless, there are few or no mentions of a particular teacher 'role model' (Goodson, 1991: 40; Younger et al., 2004: 250). On the other hand, the earliest deciders appear to have been directly influenced by a generalised and, in the main, positive view of teachers and they are explicit in this; in one case, the participant was aware, from a surprisingly early age, of the skill and care of his teachers; the other early decider was prompted to consider teaching because of an opposite view and experience of teachers. Although, with the exception noted, most speak fondly of teachers, and in particular Classics teachers, several are clear that they would not wish to follow the same teaching style, contrary to examples found, for example, in Younger et al. (2004: 258). However, from their experiences of school, it might be assumed that these individuals enjoy and rise to educational challenges and some make it clear that they particularly enjoy intellectual challenges,

and/or demonstrate persistency in pursuing activities. In addition, they may have high expectations of success in what they choose to do. In that sense, an intrinsic attractor may be the challenging aspect of teaching, both broadly and intellectually, and the value placed on potential success in that sphere. Most participants articulate a perception of teaching as more intellectually challenging than what appears to be a commonly held view. As one participant states, teaching is an occupation that not everyone can enter. Thus, it appears that some of the respondents view teaching and teaching Classics as possessing a certain status, albeit not necessarily in the conventional sense; several have, for example, turned down offers in conventionally higher status roles.

In relation to the second research question, the desire to teach and the wish to teach *Classics* appear to be intrinsically linked for most of the participants, with the exceptions being the earliest decider and a later, 'snap' decision-maker. For all but the two earliest deciders, the participants chose teaching after choosing or being introduced to Classics at school. For these eleven there is a view of Classical subjects as special; even those few who were less aware of this while at school have become more so as they have trained and entered teaching. There does appear to be something of a mission related to the desire to teach Classics, although this is expressed in a variety of ways. It appears to be the case, however, that the later the decision to teach was made, the stronger the importance of the subject in the mission appears to be. Similarly, the more unusual or special the perception of Classics, the stronger the sense of a mission appears to be. What all have in common in the sense of their mission, however, is an awareness of the relative scarcity of provision of Classics in schools, which a few relate directly to state sector schools in particular, and a desire to offer the opportunity to learn Classical subjects to all young people. The sense of a mission, therefore, also emanates from the relatively low profile of Classics on the curriculum.

The findings relating to the third research question, relating to the educational path and background of the participants, are similarly complex. Most of those who were less aware of the 'specialness' of Classics when young attended state schools. On the other hand, most of those who demonstrate a greater sense of status in the 'specialness' attended independent schools. However, it is not possible to draw any conclusions

from this since, in both cases, there are exceptions and there will, undoubtedly, be other factors at play. Those with a strong sense of a state school-based mission have varied educational experiences and it is not clear where their sense of an injustice in the school system originates. Half of the participants took up posts in the same type of schools they attended but therefore half did not. While a few participants have teachers in their families, most do not and several come from families whose members have not previously attended university. Similarly, it is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding those whose parents left school at 15 or worked in manual occupations and those whose parents are Oxbridge educated and worked in the City or were teachers. Perhaps, as already noted, choosing to take a Classics degree and attending a Russell Group university may counterbalance other factors more than might have been anticipated.

In terms of the developing views of these teachers, it is perhaps surprising to find that they remain relatively idealistic and optimistic about their chosen profession. Although some appeared to express a view of Classics teachers holding a special status, once they have been teaching for a year, most have moved towards a more collegial view of teachers and teaching generally as a special occupation. It may be that this is due to the circumstances of their individual schools or it may be that this is part of a process of acculturation in Classics teaching itself, which will be discussed in the following section. These teachers appear to view their occupation positively, both in terms of its demands and in terms of their colleagues. With one exception, they cannot at this point envisage anything leading them to give up teaching. Although idealistic, they also appear to have held relatively realistic expectations of teaching; while there has been a broadening of their outlooks during their training and their first year in post, most of the participants suggest that their early views of teaching were relatively accurate, albeit not necessarily acknowledging the extent of some of the demands they had envisaged.

The participants' intrinsically motivated influences, such as the importance of the subject and the desire to maintain and increase its provision, remain strong. Another important attractor, the interpersonal element of teaching, appears undiluted and a

few suggest teaching has had a positive effect on them in this respect, developing their interpersonal skills.

As Dörnyei (2001) observes, those motivated to teach may have experienced several negative influences (p. 157) and, regardless of whether they have teachers in their families, this appears to be the case for some. Younger et al. (2004) observed similar experiences as bringing out a 'strongly moralistic positioning' (p. 258) in trainee teachers and, to a certain extent, this can be observed in this study, or rather an awareness that such a positioning might be considered as common. An interesting element in the study overall is represented by the counter-identifier, who appears to have faced more negativity generally than some others. Perhaps it is to be expected that the participant whose motivation for entering teaching was in direct contrast with that of the others might represent opposing views in several respects. It appears that, unlike most of the others, this individual was not necessarily expected to attend university and does not have the universal approval of both parents in choosing teaching. In addition, this participant is the exception in articulating negative views on the 'specialness' of Classics teaching both at the end of the PGCE and after a year in post. Furthermore, there is, at the end of the Newly Qualified Teacher year, a sense in which this respondent is more likely, albeit marginally, to leave teaching. As already observed, there were a variety of factors involved in this view of teaching, and in particular teaching Classics; it remains to be seen whether these exceptional views are functions of being a counter-identifier or of a particular set of circumstances for a particular individual at a point in time.

## **5.5 A communities of practice framework**

The research process clearly involves continuous reflection, on the detail of the study and on broader theoretical issues. This section outlines a framework within which the study might be situated and which might be explored in future research, as well as further reflections on aspects of the process. The literature search unearthed relatively few studies which set out an explicit theoretical framework. Numerous studies over several decades, such as those of Lortie (1975), Reid & Caudwell (1997), Kyriacou et al.



(2002) and Manuel & Hughes (2006), have articulated the motivation to teach in terms which have been mapped onto a psychological framework of intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives. Although such an approach provided a useful heuristic typology, future research on the influences and process of becoming a Classics teacher might be helpfully discussed within a broader theoretical framework such as that of 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

For Lave & Wenger a 'community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 98). Where Wenger suggests the concepts of identity and communities of practice were important in his earlier work with Lave, he brings them 'centre stage' in his own later work (Wenger, 1998: 11f). As observed in the literature review, teaching is bound up with identity. In the communities of practice context, learning is 'social participation' where participation refers 'to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities' (Wenger, 1998: 4). Learning to teach inevitably involves 'identity formation and transformation' (Smith, 2006: 620). Thus a community of practice framework seems appropriate, in particular, to the discussion of the participants' development and in elucidating the notion of *becoming* a teacher of Classics. As Wenger notes, the 'analytical power of the concept' (Wenger, 1998: 6) of communities of practice is that it integrates aspects of learning such as 'learning as experience', 'learning as doing', 'learning as belonging' and 'learning as becoming' (ibid.: 5). As such, it might be helpful in exploring the notion of moving from intending teacher, to student teacher and finally to practising teacher. Central to Lave & Wenger's framework is the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 29; Wenger, 1998: 11). In this context, 'learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners...and mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community' (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 29). Aspects of the study appear to fit neatly with a communities of practice approach and future research may find the framework useful in the study of trainee Classics teachers. Several of the discussion points which might be illuminated further within such a framework will be discussed below.

The importance of the interpersonal element and 'humanistic aspects' of teaching (Manuel & Hughes, 2008: 18) experienced by many of the participants in their own school days has been noted and the feeling, expressed by some, of belonging to a 'club' may become more significant within a communities of practice framework. As Wenger notes, participation in a community of practice 'is a source of identity' (1998: 56) and it may be that those choosing a career in Classics teaching are, subconsciously or otherwise, looking to 'belong'. Similarly, since most of the students enjoyed their school days generally, it might be that the school community provides an obvious setting to which they can belong as adults, with the 'humanistic aspects' generally supporting a community feel and the sense of identity in that 'belonging'. More broadly, this might relate to the 'cycle of aspirations' outlined earlier and the 'notion of production and reproduction of communities of practice through generation cycles' (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005: 63).

Bourdieu's metaphor of the game has been noted in relation to the nature of insider research and Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004), in considering the learning of student and newly qualified teachers, also adopt this metaphor and liken the concept of a community of practice to Bourdieu's 'field' (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004: 5). For them, cultural capital 'roughly equates to understanding how the game is played' (ibid.: 8), which they relate to 'the end product of [Lave & Wenger's] legitimate peripheral participation – the achievement of full membership' (ibid.). The development of the participants' views has been discussed in the context of socialisation, in particular in relation to the schools in which they work. It is possible, for example, that the slight decrease in the participants' flexibility over the two years of the study in, for example, the types of schools in which they envisage working is a result of a move towards full membership, not of the wider community of Classics teachers but of the communities of their workplaces. This will also depend, to some extent, 'on whether or not their visions of practice align with the values of the school communities they will teach in' (Smith, 2006: 621). The potential importance of the setting of the students' first posts (where I had previously assumed the school experience settings of the PGCE would hold more weight) has already been noted. This might warrant discussion within a communities of practice framework; as Wenger notes, 'there is a big difference

between a lesson that is *about* practice but takes place outside of it, and explanations and stories that are *part of* the practice and take place within it' (Wenger, 1998: 100). Thus it might be that the 'peripherality [which] provides an approximation of full participation' (ibid.), for example the PGCE school experiences, along with the elements of teacher training which are '*about* practice', such as the university sessions, are less influential in relation to some aspects of *becoming* a teacher and future choices within that career than the experiences in which the newly qualified teachers attain 'full membership' of a community of practice. In terms of learning, as Wenger observes, 'working with others who share the same conditions is thus a central factor in defining the enterprise they engage in' (Wenger, 1998: 45).

The notion of the 'specialness' of Classics has already been discussed, alongside an increased awareness of this aspect of their subject for some of the participants once they have been in post for a year; this may be a product of 'the institutional context [in which] it is difficult to act without justifying your actions in the discourse of the institution' (Wenger, 1998: 11). Similarly, the element of status assumed in studying Classics became more overtly expressed by some of the participants once they were practising teachers. As students and early career teachers, they also frequently encounter surprise, as people they meet have often not previously encountered a Classics teacher. This may strengthen the desire to 'belong' to this community, with the 'specialness' which ensues therefrom. As already observed, this view of the comparative rarity of Classical subjects and teachers appeared at odds with the frustration expressed in relation to the perception of Classics as élitist. A communities of practice approach, however, appears helpful in considering whether this élitism in fact strengthens the nature of 'belonging' in this case and marginalises those who feel they do not fit in with this aspect of Classics. This might be further explored in terms of situated learning and aligned with the observation noted earlier: that interactions within 'social structure and and culture' might lead to 'socially constructed... values... [being taken on] as a natural way of life (Hodkinson et al., 1996: 148). For example, in the case of one of the participants who articulated concerns about requiring 'a transformation of self' in becoming a teacher (Malderez et al., 2007: 230), there were also later concerns about not 'fitting in'. Again, the relationship between graduates of one of the 'newer' civilisation based degrees, as this teacher is, and the extent of the

'legitimate peripheral participation' in becoming a teacher of Classics, might be explored further. As Wenger observes, 'newcomers must be granted enough legitimacy to be treated as potential members' (Wenger, 1998: 101). This might be further explored in considering why some of the participants appear to strengthen their sense of a 'mission' in teaching Classics while a few do not.

The slightly more negative view, for some of the participants, of the adequacy of a teacher's salary might stem from the 'reality shock' of the transition from student to practising teacher (Ashby et al., 2008: 37) but, in terms of socialisation, it might relate to the increasing immersion in the community of practice of serving teachers. Other issues raised might be similarly explored: the mention by some of the teachers of the bureaucracy associated with working in schools and a sense, from one or two, that this might in fact deter them from remaining in teaching if it were to become increasingly burdensome; the surprise, for two participants, of the micro-politics of the staffroom; in contrast, the collegiality noted by some, as well as the generally positive feedback for their chosen career. As noted by Tristan, there are certain aspects and issues of which an intending teacher may not be aware when choosing to teach. They may, however, be influenced once in post by their embryonic membership of the community of teachers and of Classics teachers specifically.

In summary, aspects of the developing views of the participants might be further explored in the context of the socialisation which comes with membership of a community of practice and with the process of negotiating meaning within it. Wenger refers to practice as 'a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful' (ibid.: 51) where the negotiation of meaning is seen as a 'productive process' (ibid.: 54).

## **5.6 Implications for professional practice**

A professional doctorate will, by its nature, lead to greater reflection on the part of the researcher and one aspect of this has been to include further opportunities for reflection for those training to teach Classics. The course includes formal

opportunities for reflection, such as tutorials and other meetings but I have added further points for informal reflection, building on an early discussion of what students are seeking from the course and what their major concerns are. We have reviewed these at several points during the course, partly for my benefit as tutor but also for the students to reflect more consciously on the 'bigger picture' of their development. This also fits with the discussion above on the development of identities within a community of practice framework. In addition, although not stated as explicitly influential, there is perhaps some potential to exploit student teachers' earlier 'teacher-like' experiences more formally. While this is included in the PGCE, particularly early in the course, these experiences could be pursued more formally once the students are immersed in their placement schools (cf Huberman, 1993: 147). The research interview discussions might on whether anything might prompt the participants to give up teaching might be incorporated in the preparation for managing those situations, as well as in interviewing candidates for the course, which will be discussed below. More broadly, it was interesting to review the participants' early and relatively idealistic views of teaching as expressed in their experience of school essays; as mentioned in the discussion, the student teachers might benefit, as part of their broader reflection on teaching, from revisiting their essays towards the end of their training year and this could be simply incorporated in the PGCE course in future.

Perhaps the greatest impact might be on the selection of future candidates. Importance has been noted of early expectations of teaching and 'how such expectations change during the first years of teaching, and the extent to which such expectations impact on the decision to remain in the profession' (Kyriacou et al., 2003: 262). Although expectations are discussed at interview, it might be possible to probe with more focused questions. Future potential strengths and weaknesses in teaching might be more effectively explored with questions on what the candidates expect to find most enjoyable and most challenging in teaching. The participants in this study appear thus far to be resilient individuals who have risen to challenges, whether they are traumatic experiences such as the loss of a parent at a young age or what might be considered the more routine demands of their educational careers. Clearly the approach to challenging situations will be an important factor in teacher retention and I have

already adjusted interview questions in this respect, eliciting more detailed accounts of personal or professional challenges and their outcomes and responses.

In relation to the suggestion that long-term commitment to teaching relies to an extent on the type of motivation (Huberman, 1993: 123), teaching candidates are likely to have anticipated a general question inquiring as to their reasons for choosing teaching and Classics teaching. Some of the responses in this study suggest that a question such as '*when* did you decide you wanted to become a teacher?' might be more illuminating and result in more authentic and detailed answers.

Ashby et al. (2008: 4) comment on the attractor of teaching as an intellectual pursuit as influential in long-term retention, and indeed the participants in the current study appear to hold a similar view. Again, this might be an avenue for exploration at the interview stage. It could also be the case that teacher training courses might place greater emphasis on the motivations of the subject itself and on the importance of relationships. In relation to the attractions of the subject, an 'enhancement' day is planned for the end of the course where students will attend a day of lectures from university colleagues on aspects of the Classical world in the context of the curriculum. Again, this fits with the community of practice approach outlined earlier, where the students are not only members of the community of Classics teachers but of Classicists generally.

## **5.7 Avenues for further consideration**

In respect of the characteristics of future candidates, Cockburn & Haydn (2004) suggest that those serving teachers who describe themselves as enjoying their job tend to have decided on teaching as a career relatively early (p. 96); this appears to presume that there is then a correlation between longer-term retention and the timing of the decision to teach. The current study does not necessarily suggest any 'preference' for those who have decided on teaching early in their lives as more committed, at this stage, to teaching. The early deciders in this study appear marginally less vehement in the sense of a 'mission' related to Classics and the strength of the intrinsic attachment

to their subject discipline for the later deciders might equally relate to longer-term commitment. Whether there is any correlation between early deciders and long-term commitment might become clearer in subsequent years and would therefore require further research.

Similarly, as stated, the later deciders display a clear sense of a mission in teaching their particular subjects and this might suggest, unlike the literature, that these individuals are no less likely to remain in teaching in the long-term regardless of the timing of their decision. This may, of course, relate to the decision-making process as a *process* and the difficulty in unpacking individual moments in the decision to teach. This study suggests, at least at this early stage, that longer-held ambitions to teach or clearly thought-out decision-making processes are not necessarily more effective guarantees of producing successful teachers (cf Ball et al., 2000).

Ashby et al. (2008: 4) comment on 'a sense of belonging to communities of learning' as important in teacher retention, which maps onto a communities of practice framework. It may be that such 'communities of learning' relate to the participants' views of communities of Classics graduates and of Classics teachers, with a 'club-like' feel observed in this respect. While the subject itself is significant in this, it may be interesting to explore the extent to which this is sustained in subsequent years in teaching, and the impact it has on retention. The current participants appear, at this stage, to remain committed to teaching Classics. To what extent their perceptions of teaching, and how they develop, affect their commitment to teaching in the longer term is an area for continued exploration.

While the respondents in this study express their decision to train to teach as influenced by a variety of factors, what they appear to share is perhaps expressed by one of the participants in relation to Latin, which seems additionally to apply to teaching; while she fought against for some time and for a variety of reasons, once she had made her choices, it was as if Latin, and for most perhaps teaching, had always been there but it took some time to realise its presence and that, rather than being a friend, it was in fact a great love. The participants display a strong attachment to their subjects, regardless of whether they felt this when younger or have developed this

view more recently and this appears to be a significant influence in their choice and, at this stage, in their enjoyment of teaching.

One of the suggestions in this thesis is that some of the participants value the freedom they are given in their (independent) schools and it may be that any decreasing autonomy for teachers will affect whether and who decides to teach, in particular in the state sector. This might suggest a tension between 'Classics for all' and the 'special' nature of the subject which appears to lead to a sense of a 'mission'. Aside from noting comments on its 'other worldliness' and on the intellectual demands (of Latin), I did not unpack the 'specialness' of Classics. It may have its roots both in the perceptions of what is seen as a minority subject and the fact that successive governments have marginalised its place on the curriculum; the policy and curriculum context will be discussed below. In relation to comments on its intellectual demands, a study on the comparability of a variety of GCSE subjects suggests that Latin GCSE is one grade harder than the next hardest GCSEs (Coe, 2008), which perhaps adds to the general perceptions of Classical subjects as élitist. As has been noted, however, it is not clear what the participants understood by this 'special' nature of Classics, and this in itself is an avenue worthy of further exploration.

Inevitably, the policy context and the external 'forces responsible for the on-going evolution of the communities' (Fuller et al., 2005: 64) will have an impact on who chooses to teach and why. The effects of policy, over the last fifty years have led to the position of Classics as a minority subject and perhaps this enhances the appeal of the freedom mentioned above for those entering teaching. On the other hand, the sense of a mission suggests a feeling that Classical subjects should be available for all. While the Coalition government expresses 'pro-Classics' sentiments, at least in relation to Latin, Greek and Ancient History, the proposed draft National Curriculum for 2014 includes Latin and Greek as primary languages but only to be studied as a foundation for modern languages at secondary level, the implication being that they have no place beyond that. In contrast, the government's 'EBacc' qualification, where schools are judged on the number of students gaining five 'good' GCSEs in what are considered 'academic' subjects does include Latin and Greek as languages and Ancient History as



an alternative to History. There appear, therefore, to be contradictions in the principles underpinning the National Curriculum and national assessment.

Although groups and individuals have done much to change the perceptions of Classics, the fact that some schools introduce Classics as a marketing tool (Taylor, 2008) suggests a sustained link with aspects of Classics which might be viewed as élitist. An important expression of an aspect of this purported elitism is the treatment of Classical Civilisation. A popular subject, particularly at A-level (Bulwer, 2012: 126), it acts for many as a 'way in' to other Classical subjects. This is an important route for those whose schools do not offer Latin and Greek and for students who would not initially consider Classical languages for a variety of reasons, some perhaps associated with the view that they are élitist. Classical Civilisation, however, is excluded from the EBacc and from the list of 'facilitating' A-level subjects for entry to university, published by the Russell Group, and for use in examination league tables. A frustration with this polarised view of Classics was expressed in particular in this study by those with civilisation-based degrees. It may be that others in the same position, who studied Classical Civilisation at university partly because, as Willow put it, they did not attend the 'right' school, are deterred from teaching, or even from studying Classical subjects. The current shortage of teachers and the potential 'downgrading' of a Classical Civilisation background may well limit not only the types of schools which are able to offer Classics but also the variety of graduates who choose to teach Classics.

In addition, there is no evidence of increasing access to teacher training for Classics and it may be that increasing numbers of graduates will enter teaching 'cold' or via another route such as Teach First, which does not yet offer places for Classics teachers, or School Direct, which begins in September 2013. As Smith (2006) observed in relation to trainee teachers of Mathematics,

teacher education programmes need to create a learning space that allows for a middle ground to be established by prospective teachers where multiple identities and forms of accountability can be aligned... [Trainees] need to feel secure in their own identity so that they can take risks and imagine the teaching...as if it could be otherwise.

(Smith, 2006: 621f).

It seems that the above is likely to occur more naturally and more effectively on a PGCE.

## **5.8 Summary**

In contrast with observations in the literature (for example, Hoyle, 2001: 141), these Classics graduates are well-qualified; in most cases they have worked in spheres outside education and several turned down offers in what might be perceived as better paid and higher status occupations in favour of teaching. In that respect they appear to be more unusual than surveys suggest but they are also unusual in the extent to which, for most, the subject itself is highly significant in their decision to enter teaching. While it is clear that altruistic notions of contributing to the development of the next generation are present in their desire to teach, for most this is less explicitly expressed than the importance of passing on the 'Classical baton'. It may be that they feel that expressions of altruistic motives are assumed in discussing a wish to teach, or it may be that they might appear to be too self-aggrandising; it might also be the case that other, more intrinsic motivations such as the desire to share one's subject knowledge and enthusiasm take precedence. The extent of the influence of the subject appears to be linked with the timing of the decision to teach, with later deciders more clearly focused on the importance of the subject. On the other hand, all either viewed Classical subjects as special in some way from an early age or, where they did not, now appear to do so. There appears to be a sense of identification with Classics and thence with teaching Classics. The sense of a 'club' is conveyed, both in that not everybody belongs but also in the sense of a nurturing environment where individuals can pursue subjects they enjoy, as well as build relationships with others. These subjects are not commonly taught, relatively speaking, and most of the participants appear to view it as important that they play their part in ensuring that Classics retain a place in twenty first century education. In some cases this appears originally to have been driven by a sense of inequity in that Classical subjects are more commonly available to students in the independent sector. This leads to the sense of a 'mission' in teaching Classical subjects. While they may not be unusual in secondary teaching in valuing their subject, they appear to articulate this value unusually strongly and with a sense of 'specialness'.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the motivation of a hitherto under-researched group of teachers. Much of the previous research on the nature of motivations to teach, in which it was suggested that both altruistic and intrinsic factors influence the choice of teaching as a career, highlighted the particular significance of altruistic factors. The participants in my study report that they anticipate 'intellectual fulfilment, stimulation and creativity' as being more important in their motivating influences for choosing to teach than working with children (Moran et al., 2001: 26). My study, therefore, has suggested that, for this group of Classics teachers, intrinsic factors are at least as important and in many cases more so than altruistic ones. These factors relate not only to the activity of teaching but in particular to the importance of the subject of Classics itself. This is expressed both in terms of the inherent qualities perceived in Classics as an academic endeavour and in the importance of ensuring that young people have the opportunities to experience this 'special' subject.

Manuel & Hughes (2006) suggested that there was a 'vision of teaching [which] embodies deep-seated notions of legacy, inheritance and rites of passage that pre-service teachers may indeed expect when they begin their career' (p. 16). While this 'vision' is evident to an extent for the participants in my study, it appears that 'the pleasure of teaching' (Huberman, 1993: 116) is strongly linked to their subject specialism and the 'inheritance and rites of passage' are embodied in a sense of 'passing on the Classical baton'. Intrinsic motivation therefore appears to be important in this respect and since the importance of the subject can be significant in this type of motivation, it may be more likely that decisions in which the subject is more prominent are made later in an individual's educational career. In many cases it appears that a process of re-evaluation is significant and for some this may come early in life, through a life-changing event; it may be, however, that this 'epiphany' occurs later, after a period away from university, when altruistic and intrinsic factors come to the fore, perhaps in a wish to contribute to society in a more practical way, in a desire for greater personal fulfilment or in a recognition of the importance to the individual of their degree subject. While this might be less evident for the earliest deciders, there

exists a view of Classics as 'special' in some way across my cohort and this view develops as these participants progress through training and qualification.

A potential contradiction in the importance of Classics and this 'specialness' relates to aspects of the subject which could be considered to be somewhat negative. The place of Classical subjects remains restricted to a relative minority of schools, and this is particularly the case in the state sector. Although the picture has improved marginally in recent years, there has been a perception for some of Classical subjects representing an endangered species which requires preservation. As stated, for most of my participants, this factor is integral to their decision to choose a career in teaching. While several trainee teachers were aware of a 'special' quality in their subject long before considering teaching, others appear to move closer to this position as they progress in their careers from trainee teachers to serving teachers; this may be part of subject acculturation.

## **6.1 Contribution to knowledge**

This study contributes to knowledge of an under-researched group of teachers at a time when government and other bodies and charitable organisations are highlighting Classical subjects as contributing to the school curricula more widely. Classics has occupied a minority position in education in England for at least a generation. In spite of an increased interest in Classics in a variety of areas, at state and school level, the training of Classics teachers still retains a low profile. Although there has been an increasing demand for Classics teaching in schools and while the current government appears more supportive of the subject, wider support for Classics teacher training retains a low profile. In consequence, the demand for Classics teachers has therefore continued to outstrip supply. While it will always be important across subjects to recruit motivated teachers, it is especially important in Classics and at this time of increased interest from schools.

## **6.2 Issues for practice**

Clearly an understanding of the motivations of those choosing teaching as a career will be important in teacher training in preparing those individuals 'as members of professional learning communities who work together to advance their knowledge and critique of schooling and curriculum' (O'Sullivan et al., 2009: 179). The study has raised issues in relation to the recruitment processes, such as effective questions in probing the motivation to teach Classics in the preliminary interviews. In addition, reviewing the PGCE course itself in relation to these motivations will assist in maintaining the commitment and engagement of the student teachers, for example in providing opportunities for continued engagement with Classical subjects. The opportunity for the student teachers to review elements of their earlier reflections, such as those in the essay on school experiences, will add to their development as reflective practitioners.

## **6.3 Rigour**

The strengths and limitations of the study have been discussed in the previous chapter and the conclusions are therefore tentative. As Huberman (1993) observed, 'interest in teaching is thus a discovery' (p. 113); in asking people to account for their decisions and attempt to elicit their motivations for choosing teaching as a career, they may well engage in a form of post-hoc rationalisation. So, while they may well produce accounts that can be classified as intrinsic and extrinsic, in some cases, sometimes decisions (even important decisions) are made intuitively, perhaps even serendipitously, or for inchoate 'reasons' that are not always recognised after the event. The methodological approach adopted, however, accepts that no one 'reality' exists in this respect but the findings address the perceptions and views as expressed at particular points in time by these individuals as they looked back on why they decided to teach. Nonetheless, the study seeks to demonstrate 'authenticity' (Silverman 2006:124) in reflecting the expressed motivations of this group of trainee teachers. The exploration of different forms of data at three different points in participants' training/early career not only provided a form of triangulation but also allowed participants to review their earlier preconceptions and expectations. In addition, much of the previous research on

teacher motivation has addressed the views of trainee teachers or of serving teachers. This study, albeit on a small scale, has considered the developing views over time as the student teachers become practising teachers and once they have served their 'apprenticeship' as Newly Qualified Teachers; in short, this study has taken a 'processual' approach towards documenting and analysing motivations to teach. In addition, returning to interview the participants a year after completing training afforded them, and me as researcher, the freedom to ignore the tutor-student dynamic, if indeed it had been an issue in the earlier stages.

## **6.4 Future research**

While it might be the case that earlier decisions, made through more 'affective' influences (Lortie, 1975: 38), tend to lead to greater long term commitment, it is likely that other factors and circumstances are influential in this respect. Whether motivations for teaching Classics have an impact on longer-term retention and/or on future aspirations in teaching could be explored in continuing to research this group of teachers as they proceed in teaching (or not). How, or indeed, whether expectations for teaching Classics have been met may also have impact on retention, and suggest implications for teacher preparation, which would also require longer-term research.

## **6.5 End-note**

I identified teaching as my future career at around the age of six, with no particular reason such as teaching in the family. Pragmatics of school timetabling led me to A-levels which fostered greater interest in subjects I had not previously considered teaching, rather than Mathematics as I had earlier intended. I therefore took a degree in those subjects rather than Mathematics and pursued a career teaching French and Classics in comprehensive schools. Teaching in the state-maintained sector, and in particular in a large London comprehensive, solidified my conviction that Classical subjects should be available more widely in schools. I was not consciously aware, as a school pupil or at university, of Classical subjects as 'special' but I have become increasingly aware of the need, in my view, to ensure and increase the accessibility of

Classics in schools. As such, it may well be the case that the somewhat precarious position that Classics has occupied for the duration of my career (and before) has been significant in fostering this view, although it is not something I have considered in any depth prior to embarking on this study. It appears that most of the participants in this study hold a similar view of the importance of sustaining and increasing the provision of Classics, which appears to relate similarly to the current minority position occupied by Classical subjects. If they were indeed 'normalised' in education, as appears to be the aim of their 'mission', would this sense of a mission, significant in the motivation and commitment of these Classics teachers, in fact become diluted? As it stands, some of the participants suggest there is almost a 'duty' in teaching Classics. This sense of duty, and of 'passing on the baton' appears to stem from the relatively low profile of Classical subjects, as expressed by Kate: 'if you don't do it then there might not be someone else'.

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## **APPENDIX I: Information Sheet For Participants**

REC Protocol Number:[INSERT ONCE PROVIDED BY REVIEW BODY]

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Why become a Classics teacher? An exploration of career choice

We would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

- This study aims to explore some of the reasons graduates choose a career in Classics teaching; it is hoped this will be useful not only for those involved in recruiting and training Classics teachers but also for those advising Classics undergraduates on career paths and what might attract them to teaching
- I shall be inviting all of you on the Classics PGCE to participate
- If you agree to participate, I will ask your permission to look at your PGCE application data submitted as well as your 'Experience of School' essay
- You will then be asked if you are happy to participate in an individual interview with me, lasting up to 50 minutes
- If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. All those interviewed will be asked to sign a consent form prior to interview
- You should feel under no pressure to participate in the questionnaire or interviews if you do not wish to and I would like to make it clear that your participation or otherwise in the research will not affect your studies at Cambridge/King's; my interest in terms of this research is in the path which has led you to make this career choice and not in your performance on the course.

- Your individual data will be confidential and will only be available to me (hard copies under lock and key, electronic material password protected); outside of this all data will be anonymised so that colleagues reading it, for example my supervisor, will not be able to attribute it to you
- It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part or not. Even if you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw, this will not affect the standard of care/ education you receive at King's
- Interviews will be audio-recorded, subject to your permission to do so. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription
- You will have access to the data relating to you, for example, the transcript of the interview, so that you can confirm that I have recorded the interview accurately
- You may withdraw your data from the project at any time up until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012
- Your anonymised data may be kept for one year (until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013) to allow for re-analysis

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Jill Hohenstein, Research Supervisor

Tel: +44 (0)20 7848 3100

E-mail: [jill.hohenstein@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:jill.hohenstein@kcl.ac.uk)

## **APPENDIX II: Consent Form For Participants In Research Studies**

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Why become a Classics teacher? An exploration of career choice

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

- Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.
- If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.
- The information you submit will be published as a report and you will be sent a copy. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify you from any publications.
- I agree that the research team may access my academic records as set out in my PGCE application form, as well as my 'Experience of School' essay, for the purposes of this research project.
- I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013

- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Statement:

I \_\_\_\_\_

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.



### APPENDIX III: Sample 'Experience of school' essay: Ozzie

My background is in the private sector. After moving to the UK aged eight, I attended a boarding prep school, which was followed by a boarding senior school. My only direct experience of the state sector (assuming that popular culture doesn't count) has been my two periods of observation this year. As a consequence, my range of experience is likely to be more limited than that of some of those writing this essay. Having said that, my schools did present a very strong educational ethos, much of which I support, and which I will discuss. This is particularly true of my senior school, X school, of which my memory is better. In addition, my schools presented, via my teachers and friends, a variety of different styles of teaching and learning on which I can reflect. Notable strengths in my schooling were the pastoral support offered, and the relaxed, flexible and communal teaching methods of the best teachers. Weaknesses were largely based on an inability in some teachers to engage or support those who were struggling. All of these strengths and weaknesses were well displayed in the Classics department, from which I draw much of my inspiration for teaching.

As we were constantly reminded by our housemaster at X school, the school was *in loco parentis* for all of our time there, and it took this responsibility very seriously. It was not simply trying to teach us, it was trying to bring us up. The attempt was to create well educated, but also "well rounded" individuals, an aim that more than satisfied the demands of the National Curriculum that our moral, spiritual, social and cultural development be catered for. Almost every hour of the day was planned, with extra-curricular activities following lessons, and these in turn being followed by prep-time. As well as compulsory Chapel twice a week (those of other faiths could opt out; atheists could not) and compulsory sport three times a week, we were also required to spend an afternoon a week doing either CCF training or community service. In addition to this were myriad afternoon "voluntaries", an ironic name given that they also became compulsory. These could be anything from building a kit car in the DT department to participation in the debating competition. There was also a moderately well attended Classics society, which made much use of the goodwill of our teachers' Oxbridge contacts. While this upbringing was highly regimented, and could be criticised for

attempting to press a standard personality on us – that of the “classic public school” pupil - the amount of choice on offer also allowed individuals to explore their own interests and to shape their beliefs, as well as giving us opportunities for leadership and creative flair, as we were often expected to organise the societies and activities that we were participating in. Of course, a system like this could only really be implemented as fully in a boarding school, but it has impressed upon me the value of engaging with pupils in the extra-curricular sphere. This seems to me to benefit both pupil and teacher for, as the pupil is able to develop aspects of her/his personality, the teacher is often able to connect with the pupil on a more personal level, which in my experience greatly benefited the relationship in the classroom.

This relationship was also benefited by the strong pastoral element at X school. This came from a number of different sources. Non-academic matters would usually be dealt with by the housemaster, who was generally available for an impromptu chat, but could also be discussed with the chaplains, school counsellors, or the house matron, all of whom were easily accessible and ready to offer their time. Academic discussions were usually held with a pupil’s tutor. All pupils were assigned to a tutor group within the house, generally comprised of two pupils from each year. Different tutors had different styles, but they commonly attempted to foster a “team spirit” within their tutees, encouraging the older pupils to look out for the younger ones both socially and academically. An hour a week was set aside for whole tutor group discussions, while one-on-one sessions would take place as necessary, but usually occurred once or twice a week for around fifteen minutes. In addition to this, a member of staff would be “on duty” in the house each night, complementing the continual presence of housemaster, matron and deputy housemaster, and pastoral support often came from this figure, particularly if s/he was a pupil’s subject teacher. It was during evening discussions with one of my classics tutors that I was introduced to many of the ideas that stimulated my enthusiasm for the subject and for academic study more widely. This wealth of pastoral support provided not only the social support required by the notion of being *in loco parentis*, but also the academic “extras” and guidance that allowed struggling pupils to be supported and successful pupils to be stretched. In this way, the aims of differentiation were achieved partly outside of the classroom. However, one major criticism that I have come across from a number of my friends is that this

support system was ineffective in helping those with learning difficulties. There was insufficient knowledge and application of the ideas around learning support amongst tutors and housemasters, and pupils with often quite serious learning difficulties went undiagnosed and therefore unsupported. There was a learning support department at the school, but it was small and poorly advertised, with the result that many of those who could have benefited from it did not. I am sure that this was not a conscious failing on the part of the school, but it was certainly a major one. Nonetheless, despite once more being something harder to implement outside of the boarding school system, this multi-faceted approach to pastoral support is something that I think of very positively. By giving pupils a range of support options, and engaging with them academically outside of the classroom, problems could be overcome and interests excited very effectively.

Similarly multi-faceted was the school's approach to setting, streaming and mixed ability classrooms. Up until GCSE the school employed all three systems. On entering the school, pupils were placed in streamed sets A-E for Science, English, Geography and RE, based on their results in Common Entrance or Scholarship examinations. Separate sets were then employed for Maths, French, Latin and the other languages based on the same criteria. History, Drama and Music classes, on the other hand, were in groups of mixed ability. These sets were flexible and adjusted according to an individual pupil's performance. I changed sets in Maths, French and Latin, whilst a friend of mine in E set was allowed to have English classes with the B set as this was a particular strength of his. In the sixth form, however, all classes were of mixed ability. In this way, I have experience of all the different systems. The social problems with setting/streaming were very clear at X school. Children in higher sets were often stigmatized as "nerds" etc, and generally were amongst the least popular outside of the classroom, whilst those in lower sets often had low academic self-esteem, and would more commonly display poor behaviour, which surely contributed to lower attainment. Mixed ability classrooms tended to counteract this social problem, as they allowed pupils from different social groups to interact on an equal footing. The pre-GCSE mixed classes certainly helped to make me more confident socially. Academically, setting was unhelpful if a pupil was in the wrong set, but equally a good fit could be beneficial. Close monitoring helped a great deal with this problem. My own changes of set helped

me to find a suitable level, and my performance improved after them. With Latin and Greek, setting was sensible for at least the first year, as pupils were entering the school with a wide variety of experience in the languages. In the mixed ability classrooms, I did not feel that I was at any disadvantage academically, even when, in GCSE History for example, the classes were not necessarily made up of those who had already formed a close attachment to the subject. It is true, however, that the History department was considered to be very strong, with a number of highly talented and popular teachers, and that mixed ability classrooms may not have been so successful with teachers less able to generate the enthusiasm that the History teachers did. In discussing the issue of setting with friends, I have encountered a good deal of support for it, with people often feeling quite strongly that they would have been disadvantaged by being placed in a mixed ability classroom. Personally, I am ambivalent. While I feel the negative effects of setting discussed above should be avoided wherever possible, I do feel that in a subject like Latin or Greek in which there is a clear progression of knowledge and classrooms do have a certain pace, the attempt that setting makes to group pupils according to the pace of their learning makes sense.

In my experience, however, the most important element of a successful classroom was good teaching. The factors that seem to have been shared by the most successful teachers at X school were that a teacher commanded respect, that teaching was relaxed and flexible, and that a communal approach to gaining knowledge was used. Respect could be gained in different ways. Some teachers were strict, which could make them unpopular, but which equally meant that pupils sat up and listened to what they said. Preferable were those teachers who were respected simply because pupils liked them. These teachers were often quite informal, but at the same time shared a clear passion for their subject that they were able to transmit, and pupils responded to this with respect, and therefore likewise sat up and listened. Classrooms in which the teacher wasn't respected, usually for being seen as weak, were often chaotic and marked by the difficulty of transmitting any message within them. Classrooms in which the teacher or subject were seen as boring (a particular problem for the Classics teachers) would often be full of half-asleep pupils. The teachers who were respected because they were liked generally also fostered a relaxed, flexible atmosphere in their classrooms. Discussion was often very informal, which helped to give pupils the confidence to share

ideas, and teachers were happy to come at ideas from different angles if a message wasn't getting through. In addition, the best teachers often showed a willingness to respond to the mood and energy levels in the classroom by altering the subject matter or teaching style appropriately. All this, of course, also helped to make them liked and respected. Where a teacher had only one level, and essentially delivered a pre-prepared speech to the class in quite a formal atmosphere, pupils were less enthusiastic and learning was less successful. The best teachers also created a communal learning atmosphere, in which classes felt like discussions as much as lessons. Whether we were left to make our own notes from these discussions, or whether class-agreed notes were then put up on the board at the end, the key was that the knowledge had been created communally. A teacher would introduce and guide a discussion, but it would feed upon the ideas generated by the pupils. Of course, these ideas had to be carefully sifted and shaped by the teacher to ensure that the knowledge we gained was the knowledge we needed, and this was one of their key skills. This combination of good teaching factors created classrooms in which pupils wanted to learn, felt confident enough to be involved the generation of knowledge, and were able to do this together in a communal atmosphere.

These strengths and weaknesses were as present in the Classics department as in any other. An inability to be flexible with the presentation of material, to make it seem more accessible or even fun, marked some of the worst teaching. To many pupils, the subject seemed dusty and pointless, and some of the (generally older) teachers seemed to be presenting it from a lofty academic distance, not shaping it to a young audience, nor displaying the obvious, engaging enthusiasm of the most successful teachers. Others displayed all of the best qualities discussed above. A quality particularly important to the best Classics teachers was an ability to bring the subject to life, partly through their own enthusiasm, and partly through teaching methods such as the use of drama and visual aids, and a communal approach that allowed pupils to feel that the "truth" about the ancient world was not set in stone, but could be prodded and poked and seen afresh. The creation of a comfortable, informal atmosphere was aided greatly by comparatively small class sizes, particularly at A Level, which moreover helped to engender a family-like sense amongst Classicists, something that I found particularly inspiring. Not only was this a subject that I liked and was good at, it was also a

movement that I was a part of, and the close support of many teachers made me feel this all the more keenly. Given that Classics is unlikely to become either mainstream or hugely popular in the coming years, this sort of ability in teachers to make pupils feel special for engaging in their subject has to be crucial to the subject's survival. In terms of language teaching, the department's approach was traditional. In language lessons, we would be introduced to a new piece of grammar, we would then do sentences on it, and a random passage would be set for homework. Vocabulary tests were regular and written. We had no set course books, but rather dipped into grammar and exercise books as necessary. We had separate teachers for language and literature classes, with literature being far more popular amongst pupils and, it seemed, teachers. This approach worked for most pupils, but, especially when it was used by the less effective teachers, pupils could suffer from its inflexibility, particularly those with learning difficulties. These, as discussed above, were poorly catered for by the school, which was harmful to the teaching of classics. This failing has impressed upon me the importance not only of teachers taking more flexible and varied approaches to the teaching of Classical languages, but also of pupils being made aware themselves from an early stage of the notion of difference in learning styles, and being given support to explore their own. Although there was much in the Classics department that could have been improved, their support for me academically and personally, and the ability of the best teachers to excite my interest inside and outside of the classroom setting has been my biggest inspiration to become a teacher. To emulate them would be the greatest of success for me.

## **APPENDIX IV:Sample 'Experience of school' essay Willow**

Like most people, when I look back on my experiences as a pupil at school I have a range of positive and negative memories. At school every day is different from the last, and while some experiences were negative, others I remember fondly. All of my school experiences, whether positive or negative, helped me to develop as an adult and inspired me to choose a career in teaching.

Some of my best experiences as a pupil at school were at primary school. I found my primary school to be a very nurturing and supportive environment, where teachers took the time to learn the names of not just their own pupils, but every pupil in the school. I felt that all the teachers at my primary school were interested in my development and concerned for my welfare, and there was a genuine relationship of care and trust. The teachers achieved this by making lessons fun as well as informative. Lessons would often start with a game, a story, or a discussion, which caught our attention and made us look forward to lessons. My favourite primary school teacher would often use visual aids to make his lessons exciting. We once had a class project to decorate our classroom to look like a rainforest while we were studying ecosystems, and he would sometimes bring in a mystery object and ask us to use our imaginations to write a story about it. I remember these lessons fondly because this teacher went that little bit further to make our lessons exciting and thought provoking. Not only did these lessons encourage a good relationship between the teacher and pupils by providing a fun atmosphere, but they were also the lessons in which we learnt most effectively and which I still remember to this day.

My primary school offered much fulfilment and opportunity to develop in its many extra curricular clubs. The school offered clubs of all sorts, including drama, French, art and craft, and various sports. Going to these clubs gave me some of my fondest experiences at primary school, as they gave me the opportunity to discover hobbies and interests I may not have come across otherwise. They allowed me to mix with pupils from other classes, make new friends, and to foster good relationships with different teachers. They were a very important part of my primary schooling and my personal growth, and I think an important part of any school life.

My time at secondary school was less positive overall. There were many positive aspects, such as the passion for classics that my Classical Civilisation teacher helped me realise. However, secondary school can be a difficult time for many pupils, and I recall many more negative experiences from my secondary schooling. I often felt I had been let down by my school and some of my teachers, as I missed out on a lot of support and encouragement simply because of the size of classes, and the demands of both the more able pupils and the more disruptive pupils. At secondary school I was a quiet and competent pupil, which meant that while I often didn't need the attention of teachers, sometimes it was denied me when I did need it. For example, I suffered from bullying which did huge damage to my confidence at the time. As I had no real relationship of trust with any of my teachers, there was no-one to whom I felt I could turn to with problems such as this, as I could have easily done in my more supportive primary school. In addition, it was often the case that I rarely received any praise or acknowledgment for my work and my progress, as the teachers gave most of their attention to the more and less able pupils. This left those pupils of average achievement, myself included, feeling unsupported, under-praised and even ignored or disliked. I often felt that my work was of little consequence, as I so rarely received positive feedback for it despite working hard on it, and I worried that my teachers did not think highly of me because of this. This had a damaging effect on my self-esteem and the quality of my work, and also meant I felt I could not turn to my teachers for help with the personal problems I was suffering while at school. Teachers often did not learn the names of their pupils, and even in some of my smaller A level classes, I was taught by teachers who did not know my name. This added to my feeling that I was not particularly supported or liked by my teachers, and that my work was of little consequence to them. I think it is of vital importance for teachers to try to foster a more meaningful relationship with pupils than those I experienced. By learning the pupil's name and by taking an interest in their progress, the pupil will feel valued and supported, and their engagement in lessons will be improved.

This negative experience of secondary school was one of the defining motivations in my decision to become a teacher myself. I had a strong sense during my time at school that the way I felt about my education was not right, and the way I was being treated was not fair, as I was an able and hard working student. I decided then



that I wanted to become a teacher to provide a more supportive teaching style than I had received. I wanted to be able to encourage, support and inspire pupils in a way that I had not been, and it was this desire to provide pastoral support and inspiration to young people that encouraged me to follow a career in teaching.

Another negative aspect of my secondary schooling was the way many lessons were taught. In addition to having little relationship with pupils, many of my teachers were noticeably unenthusiastic about their subjects and about our learning. I remember several teachers whose lessons routinely took the form of the class sitting in silence for the whole hour working from an exercise book. We were not allowed to discuss with each other, and no group discussion of ideas or problems was encouraged or even made time for. Many teachers did little teaching themselves, most relying on exercise books to provide the explanations and work. Working in silence is obviously necessary in some situations and provides good experience for exam conditions, and I can therefore see its value in the classroom. However, when used unnecessarily it is naturally not a stimulating environment in which to learn, and had a very negative impact on the way we as pupils viewed the subjects that were taught in this way, and on our opinions of these particular teachers. If a teacher does not appear interested in their own subject or in our learning, then what motivation is there for pupils to be interested in the lessons and to work hard? One of the most important things I learnt at secondary school with regards to teaching styles is that pupils generally do not learn effectively from this style of lesson, and teachers must give pupils a reason to be interested in the subject by making their own enthusiasm for it evident. Working from an exercise book in silence did not help me to learn, but only created a feeling of resentment for the subject and a sense of dread for those lessons.

My Classical Civilisation lessons were some of the few exceptions to these negative experiences at secondary school. In these lessons, the teacher's passion for the subject was evident, and it encouraged me to take interest in what she was teaching. Our lessons were stimulating and thought provoking, and our teacher was approachable and well liked by pupils. The teacher often brought the subject to life through drama and art activities, and I still vividly remember a variety of lessons from Year 7 to Year 13. From acting out a play in Latin in Year 8 to discussing Euripides as a

class in Year 13, my classics teachers inspired me with their enthusiasm for the subject and their innovative approach to teaching. I received regular feedback and encouragement from my teacher, who was exceptionally helpful during my A level coursework. Her enthusiasm for my topic motivated me to research the topic further and made me feel proud and excited about my work. Her interest also convinced me that she was concerned for my well being and my development in this subject, which made me feel as though my work was valid and that I could easily approach her with questions or problems. I even approached this teacher to ask her advice when I was first considering a career in teaching Classics, and she was particularly encouraging and helpful, and glad to be asked.

It was these secondary school experiences, both positive and negative, that first encouraged me to become a classics teacher myself. I was encouraged by the negative teaching styles I had experienced to provide a better school experience for pupils, hoping that I could give students a more supportive and inspiring learning environment than I had sometimes received. My positive experiences in my Classical Civilisation lessons helped me realise a long-standing interest in classics, and helped me develop my abilities in the language and literature. By the end of my A levels I realised that I would like to keep the study of classics as an important part of my life and career, and I wanted to bring my enthusiasm for the subject to teaching

I have since been back to my secondary school to undertake lesson observations in preparation for my PGCE. I found that much had changed for the better in the school, and the teaching styles I had found so uninspiring are no longer in operation. I observed a range of lessons in Classical Civilisation, Latin, and English, and talked to teachers of other subjects about their lessons. The lessons were much more engaging than they had been while I was a pupil at the school, and had been designed to maximise pupil involvement in the lessons. In each lesson the teacher began by explaining the aims of the lesson through learning objectives. Lessons were then taken up with a variety of activities, with group work and discussion featuring heavily. Pupils were rarely asked to silently work from an exercise book, but were encouraged to share ideas with each other and to ask questions. They were set engaging tasks which helped bring the subject to life, such as playing memory games, making models or

drawings, or designing presentations to report back to the class. Pupils regularly responded very well to these lessons and worked hard at the tasks set. They were often tested at the beginning of lessons on what they had learnt previously, and they regularly responded with enthusiasm due to their engaging lesson structure, which had a positive effect on their learning. Feedback and reinforcement was given to all pupils, and they were often rewarded with house points and other reward systems. When rewards and praise were offered, pupils were very keen to work hard and to do well, showing that positive reinforcement can be a very effective way of encouraging enthusiasm in pupils. The pupils' attitudes towards teachers were also noticeably improved. Teachers appeared to be well respected and well liked for the most part, and pupils came to them for help and advice when needed.

Seeing the improvement in teaching in my secondary school has encouraged me even further in my wish to become a teacher. It is inspiring to see how the problems that I experienced at the school have seen such an improvement, and it has proved to me that this engaging and supportive style of teaching is far more beneficial to pupils' well being and learning than some of the more uninspiring teaching I received.

## **APPENDIX V: Interview 1 Schedule**

When did you decide you wanted to become a teacher?

Can you identify any influences?

Reading about education (has been a big push for teaching in recent years)?

Family or friends?

Parent(s) involved in education?

When did you decide you wanted to study a Classical subject at university?

Influences?

School

Friends/family

Media (TV, films)

Books

Where the two decisions linked?

Do you think you might have become a teacher even if not Classics?

Importance of the subject?

Were there any other options you considered?

Have there been any points at which you were thinking teaching might not be right for you?

What was your experience of school? (check single sex/co-ed. etc)

Subjects?

Teachers?

Friends?

'Teacher-type' roles?

Did you have any (formal) careers advice?

Qualities making a good teacher/teaching? Your qualities?

Has your current experience of teaching confirming or contradicting your initial thoughts?

How much did you find out about teaching – formally or informally – before deciding to apply for the course?

Any prior experience of teaching?

Do you have any future career plans?

Anything you think might cause you to give it up?

Do you view teaching as materially rewarding?

What are people's reactions to the fact that you're a teacher/ Classics teacher?

Choice of NQT school type? Was it a preference/specific choice?

Anything to add/any potential influences we haven't mentioned?

## APPENDIX VI: Transcript interview 1 Pippa

A: So an obvious question then, when did you first decide, if you can remember, that you wanted to become a teacher?

X: Um, probably sounds a bit corny, I think it just kind of crept up quite slowly. You know those adverts, for teaching, where it says – I was looking at them the other day, you can't find them any more but they're on YouTube – you know it says, 'Can you find a way in?' and there's a girl running into a maze and the maze is shaped like a brain. And this was, 'Can you spot the mean number?' And there were loads of kids with numbers [on their heads??]... Do you know what I mean? And it was, 'Can you explain how?' and there was an old man and he moved his hand and there was his number from the concentration camp. And then it was 'why' and I just thought, wow, that's really inspiring. And previous to that they had the adverts where celebrities were saying their favourite teacher and one of those was my history teacher at the time, because it was [celebrity]... So A ... taught me history. Things like that, I know it's really corny...but that's what the adverts were designed for and I just thought, that's really inspiring. But also, I suppose the fundamental thing, which never really clicked until recently, was that my dad was a teacher.

A: Oh yes.

X: And the fact that he helped... he was a, yes, I suppose prep school teacher, so primary, up to year 8, and he taught loads of things back in the day when you could teach loads of things – English, History, mostly English. And the effect that he's had on adults now, it's really something. They come back to me and say your dad's the reason I'm a journalist. And that's really something. He taught [well-known presenter]'s son.

A: Did he, gosh.

X: Yeah, he went to [prep school]. And, er, I don't know, I find that super-super inspiring.

A: Yes.

X: And I just think, if I can make that tiny bit of difference, it'll be worth something. And I feel like... because I've lost him, I feel like I'm following in his footsteps... So it's always seemed like the really obvious choice for me, as an instinct. Do you know what I mean?

A: Yes, so even when you were a child and your dad was a teacher?

X: Um, I never really thought about my future, I thought about subjects. I was very hardworking. I used to help my friends out but I never said, oh I want to be a teacher, I'd say until I was leaving school probably. And I think because I've always really enjoyed the community that a school has, whatever kind of school it is... and you feel quite safe. That's quite nice, when you see what that provides. And I've always, it's I've known, do you know what I mean? I've tried loads of other things but it's always nice to go back to something you know and you know you love.

A: So what kind of other things have you tried?

X: Um, I've travelled a lot and I've learnt some new languages. I went to Italy, and that was nice, all on my own. I went age 19, I look back on it now and think, was I mad? I mean, my parents, how did they let me? But that was amazing. Went to Rome for a bit. And I spent a year at [historic palace]. That was fabulous but it was such a repetitive job. You know, you met different people every day but it was so sort of temporary, fleeting. If I was making a difference, well, that's what they used to say, X, you're making a difference but if I was making a difference it was only fleeting.

A: But I suppose it's difficult to know what impact, longer term, that fleeting difference will have on that person.

X: That's true...

A: So probably similar to teaching in some sense, sometimes you don't see... there is an impact but you don't see one.

X: Yes, it was like being a mini-lecturer I suppose... It was a wonderful place to be. I think, because I had, that year I had a job offer from a... weird graduate scheme thing. I had an offer from [computer company] in London and – I don't know whether I'd told you that? – and I couldn't do it. I know the salary was extortionately good but I just thought, no, I can't do it, I can't do that to myself. So I thought, you choose this wonderful historical building, and I did and it was wonderful, a great year but I couldn't do it again. A year was perfect, one winter, one spring, one summer.

A: And, er, we'll come back to that in a minute but what kind of job was on offer with [global computer company]?

X: It was sort of admin, organising, a team, you were part of a team. I think they try and recruit graduates who have got logical...erm, they love Classicists...you know, those kind of skills. One of my friends went through the same scheme and he works for [company], you know, earning lots of money, but he's not happy!

A: Yes, classic story! Erm, so, obviously your dad was an influence, and making a difference was important, and the teaching ads, how old were you when you saw the teaching ads?

X: Um, about fifteen, fifteen to eighteen.

A: So still at school?

X: Yes. Do you remember those adverts?

A: Yeah...Yes, I do, they were probably the first time we had teaching adverts on the telly...whereas now you have them all the time.



X: You had the ones that were...just really imaginative. You had the ones without the heads, so 'use your head, teach', they had people going to offices without heads. They're quite fun, those adverts.

A: Yes, and they must work otherwise they wouldn't spend the money on them I suppose.

X: No, I think they do work, they worked for me anyway.

A: And were there any other relatives or friends who influenced you? Who said, you know, oh you should be a teacher or anything like that?

X: Erm...Having my father being a *huge* person in the school that I went to...And my mum worked there as well, it meant that all of my parents' friends were educators, thereabouts, yeah, and so I've grown up around...extraordinary people, who worked to help others. And I suppose if your dad was a doctor you'd be friends with loads of doctors... For example, my old headmaster, he's a really great person, I still keep in touch with him, and he's a great man – he's done some really wonderful things in his life... So I've grown up admiring these wonderful people, that are now...you know, they really approve of what I'm doing, which is great, I find that really helpful... So I think, it's probably just the way I was brought up, the kind of ethos that my parents had, thoughts on where you are, how you should pursue your career, things like that.

A: And I've forgotten what your mum did at the school...?

X: Um, no, she was just a registrar. But she was there, she was there!

A: Um, and then, when did you decide to study Classics at university?

X: Oh, good question. Erm, I had like a constant battle with Latin, I loved it right from when I started and then I got one of my first Latin tests, I was year 6 I think, I got 98%, so I was like, right, okay, need to take this one, it was great, so I couldn't give it up. And then choosing my GCSEs I wasn't sure. And then my dad forced me to do it and I thought, I was torn between – I don't know why – Spanish and Latin. And I chose Latin,

and that was definitely the right thing to do. And then I always knew that it was something that worked well, that worked with me, it just seemed to suit my personality. And then we did Latin a year early, and then we did a Class Civ GCSE and that was such fun, I just loved it. And then - it's funny, I was talking about this earlier - in the lower sixth, that was the first year they did ASs, so you had to drop one for A-level. And I was an Art scholar, as well as others, and... I said I want to drop Art because I want to carry on with Latin, because I had to do French [and??] and they wouldn't let me, because they said you're an art scholar, you'll lose your scholarship. And I really kicked up a fuss, I went to see the headmaster and everything, so that I could carry on doing Latin... Do you know what I mean, I've never been able to shed it. I tried...I didn't really try, I didn't put all my effort into it but I was never... I couldn't, I wouldn't allow myself. And then, when the time came for applying to universities, I was looking at English and Classics. And then my parents had a car accident so I didn't end up going to university for two years and then I applied to [university]. And then, it was like, when I applied to [university], it was at the time that I really thought, I finally allowed myself to be who I am, no English, just straight Classics.

A: Oh right.

X: And then it was like...relaxing, it just slotted into place, do you know what I mean? But I really did fight it. I don't know why, looking back on it now.

A: Is there a Classical tradition in your family? You weren't kicking against...?

X: No no no, I think if anything I was trying to follow, probably, my dad's love of English. But then I thought to myself, I remember when I was considering my UCAS form and I had to divide the two because I thought, I can't bear not reading and I can't bear never doing Latin again. So I just kept going. And then the same thing happened at university, I'm going to finally give in to what's inside of me, I'm going to go into teaching.

A: So the two are very much linked? Or do you think you might have been a teacher if you'd studied English?

X: Um, I don't think so. That's a really interesting question... I think...if I'd studied English, I think if I'd studied English I'd have been more interested in things like theory of knowledge and I maybe would have taught a wealth of subjects so maybe gone into primary. But Classics was so...do you know what I mean? I'm not actually sure that I'm that good at English. I did really well at uni but it wasn't something that clicked like Classics. I think, had I done that at university...I don't know... Like [SE2 mentor] English, he's got a degree in it. I don't know, I know it's great and everything but it's actually quite airy fairy, it depends on who you are and your ego, do you know what I mean? So I'm much happier to teach something else that isn't...

A: That's more content-based...?

X: Yes, exactly, and also...I mean Classics is such a wealthy subject.

A: It's English as well...

X: Yeah, it is, absolutely. Like my year 9s the other day, they're so bright. We were revising, and we started talking about something else completely because they already knew it and they wanted to know about other stuff. I told them about Catullus, they don't need to know about Catullus but I told them all about Catullus but I told them anyway and they were really interested and they loved it. It's like doing English really. That's the thing about Classics, you get examined on certain things but they also learn about other stuff.

A: So did you know it was that broad when you went into it at university?

X: Oh definitely. That was one of the things I wanted to do at university, because I'd done Latin A-level, and GCSE, and I'd done GCSE Classics [Classical Civ]. I *loved* Classics, absolutely loved it, it was such fun. I remember we went off to Greece that year and I saw everything we were learning about. And er, ...at uni, I was excited about...You know when you apply you look through all the things they do and I thought, right, I'm

going to pick Ancient History, I'm going to pick Roman History, or Sparta, Egyptology, things like that...

A: Okay. Well we've kind of covered the other, the next question, which is were there any other options you'd considered...was there anything else other than the [historic palace] job you did, obviously, and the [computer company] thing...?

X: Yes, I think the only thing I...in my life, I see myself ever achieving is being a ...like a writer, a freelance writer, something I've always really enjoyed. But never, not as a journalist. But I see myself as a teacher, as going into teaching I might be able to do that anyway. I've never ever thought I would have a career out of being a writer but I do write crap for fun...I've written bits and bobs. Yes, and it's something I really like doing, just for creative... Do you know what I mean? And it's something in my family we all do, we all write really stupid things, I don't know why, for Christmas and we'll write a poem or a story... That's just something, it's the only other... it's not really a career but it's the only other thing I'd consider doing in my life. And I think if I died and I'd had a few poems published and a successful career as a teacher I'd be a happy person. Do you know what I mean? There's nothing else I...apart from maybe having babies, there's nothing else I really [want to achieve?]

A: Great! Erm, then, have there been any points along the way when you've wondered about whether teaching was right for you or vice versa?

X: What's vice versa?

A: I mean or when you don't think you're right for teaching?

X: Oh I see. Err... Oh I wouldn't...my instinct when you said that to me was maybe one or two times but I can't remember any. Maybe when we were first starting out...

A: It's quite overwhelming?

X: Yeah, really overwhelming, thinking will I deal with this. And when I think about it, when I think about the amount of responsibility I will have, which they [new school?]

keep going on about. Although I don't know why they keep going on about it. Um, yeah, that frightens me but that's just worries about it.

A: Yes, that's normal.

X: Yes, that's nerves. So not really. I think, SE1 went really really well, and SE2, I think when I first started [mentor] said I've got exactly the right instincts and that's exactly the right thing to say to me so I don't think I'm doing the wrong thing, so I definitely think it's the right...it definitely suits me. As to whether I'm any good, I think I'm okay...I know that I can definitely improve.

A: Well, that's the same for us all isn't it! Okay, we'll come back to having the right instincts in a minute but is there anything you can envisage that might lead you to give up teaching – I know it's a really...really hypothetical question...But if something about the career changed or...

X: I don't think so. Even if I had poems published, no, because I'd be bored. It's just something that fills up your life really. The only thing I can think of really is in reference to my family, if something awful happened or if I had like eight children at once! But only something like that.

A: So nothing related to the job itself?

X: No.

A: Okay, so you said you have the right instincts, what do you think they are, what do you think are...what makes a good teacher?

X: Tricky question... So many things. And so few! I think...the most important thing, I've realised, is being personable and some of the things I love about Classics and about teaching...it's the human aspect. If you're looking, the kids are looking, everyone's relating to everybody – the connection. I don't think you can really be a dry character that sits in the corner, they're not going to get as much from it as they should. So I think [being] personable is really important. Obviously enthusiasm and love for your

subject... and I do think you need to have a certain amount of wisdom...Or at least someone to go to who's got wisdom. Something I've known since [SE2] is that everyone's very wise. And I'll bounce some ideas round and they'll tell me...what the right thing is. You know, you can't be an idiot, you can't be a young, immature idiot. No, it's not going to work. And the other thing...really is a personal thing...I think humility is really really important – so that you are aware that you [are a just a micro-grain??], that you need to change constantly. You know the idea of someone thinking yes, I'm doing the right thing and this is it. You're aware that you put your feelers and that you might be able to change, I think, be flexible as well. I'm a great fan of humility, I think it's probably a Christian thing, I don't know... No I think, yes, to always be ready to sit down and think, I didn't do this well or I didn't do that right, he's wrong or is he wrong?

A: So not assuming you're right... Except when you need to with a tricky class!

X: Yes, absolutely.

A: So has your experience on the PGCE confirmed or contradicted in any way your initial... the thoughts you'd built up about teaching, about what it would be like, or why you'd enjoy it?

X: I think it's slightly confirmed it. I wasn't sure, I mean all these things are sort of pushing you subconsciously... and then it worked. I think probably because it was the first school I'd ever been to [teaching], and that went so unbelievably well and then [SE2] has gone really well too. Yes, I think it's definitely confirmed any suspicion I had. Paperwork I'm not so good at... I try, really hard.

A: It's one of those things, isn't it...I think you are pretty good at it actually, if I could just interject!

X: Really? Because I work really hard, and [spend extra time?]. Um, yes, I think initially I think there were lots of things I need to slot together...that are coming together on

their own but also there are things that I need to...work on...It's all part of growing isn't it? It feels like it's gone really fast.

A: Yes!

X: I've been quite influenced by...sort of restrictions. At [SE1] I tended to take my own initiative but at [SE2] I haven't been able to do that. And last week I went to observe loads of different lessons and they were so much fun. And I realised I'd fallen into a trap and... it's quite dull. You've seen [mentor's] room? No, you haven't. No, compared to, say, [another colleague's] room...In [mentor's] room, there's no movement, you can't move, I was doing a revision test, with one of my difficult classes, and they were bouncing around and I thought, oh no, I've fallen into a trap of revision, revision, getting ready for exams, and I thought, oh what a shame. And I hadn't realised and it took me going into the different lessons to think I need to do more...be more worldly, more wise.

A: And make sure you do that in your...at [new post].

X: Yes.

A: And going back to school, your own experience of school, erm, you've sort of touched on that already, but that was part of the influences on you becoming a teacher?

X: Definitely. I'd say my first school, definitely. Second school, not so sure. They were great at my second school...in fact my old Latin teacher plays [fives?] with [HoD in new post]. In fact [HoD] sent me an email saying, 'X sends his love'. So funny, isn't it? No, Mr X was great but in fact some of my other teachers really weren't. So I thought, if I become a teacher, I'm not going to be like that. So yeah, you have positive and negative pushing you...

A: Yes. And did you find yourself, generally, helping people, almost in a role of a teacher, when you were a child, a younger person?

X: Er... I used to help my sister, and I used to really enjoy helping the less able. But when I got a bit older, about fifteen, I didn't really, I should have, I don't know. Because everyone else was bright as well...Do you know what I mean? There wasn't anyone to help. And then, for example with French, if I corrected them they'd get resentful so I just stopped. So when I was sort of young and naïve, yes, but then when I grew up a bit... I didn't want to tread on any toes.

A: You kept your head down?

X: Yes.

A: Did you have any formal or informal careers advice at school?

X: Yeah, loads.

A: And did it help or point you in any particular direction?

X: Well we did that test. You'll never guess what it said I should be.

A: A teacher?

X: No. It said I should be a golf landscape designer.

A: Wow.

X: No, it said I should be a golf landscape designer, an architect, an undertaker! That's not, that shouldn't even be on there. Because they said I was really good at spatial reasoning, I did really well in maths and so on and I've got a good brain for that but...that's Latin isn't it. Yes, so underneath was a linguist so we all laughed. I mean one of my friends got fishmonger [fish farmer?], so I mean that was ridiculous. But we did have presentations about that, and when we had presentations it was with an external guy and he asked me if I was a physicist and I'm definitely not. It's all through



a programme which was clearly not personal. And we did have like a careers room. But at that stage nobody really knew, no. I wonder how you remedy that?

A: Maybe more time, and teachers who...

X: Yes, I mean, teachers would probably evaluate you better. I've got an autistic year 9 boy and he's exceptional at everything, so what do you say. Do you say, be a Classicist but actually no, he might want to be a mathematician. So it's quite hard.

A: So thinking about your career, do you have any idea of future plans? Do you see a career path? There's no reason why you should.

X: Do you mean like housemistress? I don't, I don't really. I like the idea of just being a teacher. I don't like the idea of being a housemistress because I like my life. I went to boarding school, I know what it's like. Mine had a nervous breakdown, in my lower sixth year, and then left. So we had a new lady in the upper sixth... Um, so I'm not sure about that. And there's a really lovely guy in [school] and he's in senior management and he doesn't teach anymore and he always tells me how he's gutted...

A: Of course, that's the reason you go into it.

X: Yes... And he really misses it so...I'm not really sure about being promoted. I'm not very competitive, I don't really care about money... I probably will eventually but...I don't really know...I wouldn't mind being like a house...I'm going to be a house tutor next year but I don't know... It's not the responsibility I mind it's the time...

A: That makes sense. Okay, so you've said you don't really care about money but do you see teaching as materially rewarding, you know pay and conditions, do you see that side of it as rewarding?

X: I think it depends...Well, I think it's very reasonable but it depends. So [another student] and I are going to boarding schools so we're going to be housed very cheaply. So actually, value for money that I'm getting, it will be amazing. And then if you're at a

grammar school I suppose it's quite reasonable because you're not doing evening duties. You know... I suppose it's all levelled out really.

A: Do you think you might move sector at any point...

X: Definitely, definitely!

A: So you don't see yourself staying in that type of environment?

X: Well, the thing I've noticed, whenever I've talked to a teacher, they went somewhere for about four years and then they moved on. And when they moved on, they were there for about fifteen. Have you noticed that?

A: Yes, well, a lot of people say four years is a good time to stay in your first school and then I suppose if you find a second job that you really like... and some of it might be to do with age and stage mightn't it, you know, if you have a partner or are having children.

X: Yes, exactly

A: Okay. How much did you find out about teaching before actually applying for the course? You know, either formally or informally.

X: Quite a lot. Well, one of my friends, when we were in our first year at uni she was already looking into doing a PGCE – she's doing one at Bath, primary. So she lived with me, in the same house, so she did all the research and then threw her ideas at me. So I knew quite a lot from her. But also I did quite a lot of observation – does that count?

A: Yeah yeah yeah.

X: So going into other schools in my second and third years, just to see, just to check. And then everything confirmed my thoughts. You know when you sit in a lesson in a

school and you want to interject but you just have to keep quiet. You put your hand up. No you don't!

A: And did you or do you have lots of friends who were considering teaching or , you know, outside of your family friends, your parents' friends?

X: Um...er... I don't really know. Well, my closest friends are all musicians so no, not really. Actually no, one of them now works at a school as a resident tutor and she teaches a bit of music. And actually another one works at [another school], he's the director of music there. So yeah... but...

A: So not really friends you were aware of...

X: No not really. *But* I have to say, one of my friends I went to school with, we got in touch through Facebook, haven't really seen him for about five years and a lot of them are teachers. It's interesting isn't it! So I think it's the way we were treated, yeah.

A: Okay. Well, let me just check there's nothing I've missed, but also is there anything that you think I've missed, or anything that's influenced you that we haven't mentioned?

X: Um...Not really...Only that, well we've already said this but what a valuable subject I think Classics is. I'm not sure I would have been inspired ...I *would* have been inspired, say, to teach French and things like that... But one of the things that Classics does for me, which is really important for me is that it keeps me in England. If I became an English teacher, I would just go to France. I think French, any other subject, but Classics keeps me in England, which is a good thing. Because they don't value it as much as they do in any other country. I think it's an unusual subject in that respect. And also I'm not sure how one would teach it in a different language.

A: That's true. And how do people react, when you tell them what you're doing, friends, people at parties?

X: Really impressed. In fact when I bought my Apple, my new one, he said, 'So what are you teaching then?' and I said, Classics, Latin...all of the men went 'Whoa!' and one of them said, 'Oh, I was watching a TV show last night about how pointless it is'. And then he said something about Stephen Fry so I said, 'Well, Stephen Fry's a Classicist' and, he is isn't he or have I just made it up?

A: No, he is, he's on the front of one of the 'Why Latin' leaflets.

X: So, um, yes, very impressed. Particularly my family and friends. They're all very chuffed and think I'm doing the right thing. It's a very noble career, they think, they think you're sort of laying yourself down for others. Which you are sort of but it's not all like that is it!

A: I suppose there's an essence of that isn't there, the vocational aspect.

X: Yes. Also one thing I should have mentioned earlier, with the whole [computer company] thing, what also really attracts me to teaching is that it's a profession, you need a qualification to do it, though not necessarily in some schools. As you said, it's a vocational career and that's really valuable. Because not any old Tom, Dick or Harry can do it, you need to [??] your craft and I think that's really admirable. People actually have to go out of their way to train in something. It's like a nurse, or a doctor.

A: Yes, you do need to want to do it.

X: My mum's always going, if there's like an earthquake or something, they would want to save the teachers and nurses, doctors, so there you go.

A: And Classics teachers more than anybody I should think! On that note, are you happy for me to come back to you at some point?

X: Definitely.

## **APPENDIX VII: Transcript interview 1Joey**

A        Some of this we've probably talked about years ago at interview, so again, obvious question to start, when did you decide, if you can remember the process, when you wanted to become a teacher?

X        It was quite early actually. I am one of those silly people who says – oh I always wanted to be a teacher. After the obvious fireman and aeroplane pilot stages. I think it was around the end of primary school, sort of as I realised I was going to be going to the grammar school, I think. Just because I realised that I had some really good teachers at primary school, sort of giving me the push.

A        Confidence.

X        The push, yeah, and the confidence, to be able to go to grammar school. Yeah, I think...and that point I think I thought – oh that seems pretty good.

A        Yes, OK, so it was your experience of having good teaching.

X        Yes.

A        OK, so was it one of those primary schools where not many people went to the grammar school?

X        Yeah, I think there were three in my year.

A        And was it something that your parents had sort of said..?

X        I really didn't know what was going on, we were doing PE one time and the teacher sort of called me over as we were doing laps, which sounds horrible now –X, have you put any thought into doing your 11+? I didn't have a clue what she was

talking about. So she said send your parents in. And the next day it was like – do you want to do this exam? You might be going to a school in [area].

A OK. So your parents hadn't thought about it before then. Did they go to grammar school at all?

X No.

A So it's probably not something that would have occurred. And you are the oldest so...OK. And the other two, also, were they, do you remember if they wanted to go? Was there a little group and you would all..?

X Yes, there certainly was, the other two had probably thought about it more than me. One of them, her parents were doctors, and the other guy, who went to the same school as me, his parents were both teachers, so I imagine in the back of their heads it was already something that they'd thought about.

A OK, do you mind my asking, did your parents stay in education?

X No, my dad stayed on until sixteen, I think, and my mum was the last year when they were allowed to drop out at fifteen, whenever it was.

A Yes, back in the day. OK. We'll come back to grammar school in a minute. At that particular point then it was teachers really, and then getting your parents on board and these other couple of friends. Then was the process just cemented?

X Yeah, it essentially was. Just again, I was quite inspired by my teachers throughout my education at grammar school as well, when it came to the year nine work experience it just seemed natural to do it at a school. So since that sort of point it's been...I don't know. Yeah.

A Always something you were going to do.

X Yes.

A And it's quite important, then, your work experience, of not being a learner, but being in the role of a teacher, almost.

X Yeah, which was a bit strange.

A Aged fourteen.

X Aged fourteen. It was at a primary school. There were some secondary schools on the list. I can't imagine doing that. But yes, that was very good, I was based in a year four class.

A And do you remember any other experiences of helping teaching, maybe formally, informally, helping friends with their homework, or siblings, maybe.

X Yeah, I used to help my brothers. Never really with friends though, not particularly, I don't think. Not that I can remember.

A OK, and was there anyone along the line, as well, who also said to you have you thought about teaching? Because obviously, if you decided very early, maybe it was something everybody knew you were going to do?

X Not so much, I don't think. We had the usual sort of careers advisor chaps in school, and it wasn't taken particularly seriously.

A By you or by the staff or just generally?

X I would say by most of the students it wasn't, because it started in year ten, which I suppose we should really have some kind of thoughts as to what we would like to do.

A Not everybody does.

X        Some of us do. And so we were just given a slip of paper, write down what career you want to do, and then you were arranged by what you'd written into different groups, and met the careers advisor, and she pointed you in the direction of different folders to research on what subjects you need to do for the relevant courses, and things like that.

A        So had you put simply teacher, had you put classics teacher?

X        Teacher at that point. I suppose I was thinking classics, purely on it's the one I'm best at. I would never have said this at interview. It's probably, again, part of the reason I followed that route. It just didn't seem right to be teaching something that I wasn't the best at, so...

A        Yes. No, no, that makes sense. But at the time it was becoming a teacher that was actually the...

X        Yes, it was teaching more than classics.

A        And do you remember anything from those folders?

X        No, it was, I think, one of my free periods, my tutorial time was taken up meeting a strange careers lady who said – well why do you want to do this? And I said – I was given a piece of paper about three weeks ago and told to write a job on it.

A        And went back to doing your homework.

X        Exactly. And I think there were a group of three of us, as far as I can remember. Yes, and two of them, again, were in the same boat as me, and it was just a case of it sprang to mind.

A        OK. Well that sounds like it was a bit more of a decision you'd already made.



X Yes, I'd thought it through a little bit. I think I was perhaps a little bit embarrassed to admit that in front of the other two at the time.

A Yes, that's probably quite normal as well. And maybe they were a bit embarrassed to admit it in front of you, who knows.

X Yes, because I remember one of my friends of the three lying, and telling me he had actually written down lion tamer on the sheet, and that's why he had been put in the same group.

A Oh. I suppose stereotypically, obviously, there are more women in teaching than men, even in the secondary sector, though it depends a little bit on the subject. So were you aware of...was it amongst your friends or were you aware of people being encouraged into more male, stereotypically male jobs?

X I don't think so, because as it was a boys grammar school it was a largely, I mean most of the teachers were male, so it didn't seem a particularly feminine calling at that point.

A Yes, that makes sense. Although I suppose these days you get more mixed staff, I don't know whether they're more mixed these days?

X Probably not, not at [school he attended].

A No, doesn't sound like it. Did you have, at that point, any family or friends? You've talked about the friends, but did you have any family or family friends who were in education in any way, that you were conscious of?

X No, not that I can think of.

A So it really was your primary experience.

X Yes.

A OK, great. And so coming back to the slightly separate decisions, maybe, when did you decide that you wanted to study classics at university?

X Um...again, it really came down to my A level choices, I think. I'd had a funny GCSE time, and dropped one of my other good subjects, which was geography.

A Oh, OK.

X Just because I had some foolish times and didn't do the coursework, so dropped the subject. Then took it back up at A level, and didn't do the coursework very well again, so decided this probably wasn't the subject for me.

A Coursework, right.

X So then, by that point, I was doing, I was focussed mainly on, I think two thirds of my timetable would have been classics by that point, so it just seemed quite natural to be doing classics at university.

A So if there hadn't been so much coursework you might have been a geographer.

X I might have been a geographer, yes.

A Well, that's another discussion. And so were the influences simply that that was pretty much what you were doing, and were good at, and was there a group of friends who did that?

X Yes, there was quite a close knit group of us that did...I don't know which way it came, whether we became close knit because we were all doing...there were quite a lot of us doing Latin and Greek together, I think eight of us, perhaps, doing AS Greek, but we probably dropped to six doing A level.

A That's not bad, is it?

X No. So then we became quite close. The Latin group, again, there was probably about eighteen of us, so we were again quite close knit. So I couldn't really tell you whether it was one causing the other, or...

A Yes, a mixture. And so did most of them then go and study classics at university?

X A lot of them...well, I say a lot, just trying to think...no, not really. One of them did classics at Durham, which I had also applied for, but the others went off and did history, or English, or things like that.

A Oh, right. But obviously you were a group which enjoyed the subject, and got on well with it.

X Yes.

A Great. And the two decisions then, so teaching and classics, sounds like perhaps they weren't inextricably linked. So do you think you might have become a teacher, which you've pretty much said, even if you hadn't gone to study classics?

X Yes, probably.

A So geography, history, English.

X EFL, don't mind.

A Yes, yes, well we'll come to that as well. In fact that almost really is the next thing. So what other options did you consider as careers, and indeed, obviously do?

X If everything had gone belly up, and I hadn't got on to the course, for example, I would have stuck with the EFL teaching, and just seen how far that would have got me, and as I was in Greece it was a bit cowboy, and I would have tried to solidify it and do

all the necessary qualifications. But I think I would still have followed the same sort of route, as far as possible.

A        So what led you in to EFL originally?

X        It was a case of I was trying to get on to this course, was attempting to get sort of voluntary placements, just for a week or a fortnight or something, just with local schools, and just kept getting faced with rejection letters, for no real reason. And at the same time I was working in a take away, not doing much.

A        So this was after you'd graduated.

X        After I'd graduated. So I thought, well, I don't want to go into teaching absolutely cold, because I could totally regret it. So I thought if I'm not getting it in this manner, and I had been trying for a year to get placements, just so I can see that when I go into a school I am not going to run a mile afterwards, so I thought to hell with it, I'll see if I can do it another way, which was to google Greece EFL. Again, it was, that was I was specifically looking for Greece, actually, partly because of the classical interest, and partly because the take away I was working in was owned by a couple of Greek chaps, who I am still very good friends with.

A        So you know a lot more about Greece than other places.

X        Yes.

A        So you'd been trying to get some observation, obviously, from your final year at university, or... sort of just when you left?

X        When I left.

A        So you didn't want to apply in your final year, for teaching?

X        No. No. Again, because I didn't want to be going in totally cold, as it were.

A Yes. Didn't realise it had taken so long...all those rejection letters. OK, and so you went straight to Greece. Did you have to do any training for that?

X As I say, it was a little bit cowboy. I went through an internet agency, who provide you with their own online course, whereby it's done in two parts, part of it is a grammar thing, so that's...they say about thirteen hours, it doesn't take that long at all, if you've got any sense. It was just ticking the correct answer to each of the grammatical points. And then the other half of it was along a similar timescale and did actually take a bit longer, you would be assigned some kind of online mentor type person, and you had to explain the issues within this classroom, how you'd teach this point, or something like that. So I suppose that was a bit more rigorous.

A More pedagogy.

X Yes, and they then got in contact with [name of company] so a private language school in Greece, who wanted me as a teacher.

A Wanted to employ you. OK. And at that point it sounded like you were enjoying it once you were there, but you still wanted to come back and do secondary school teaching?

X Yes. Partly because I didn't see it as a career, to be honest. Largely because of the fact that it was done in such an unofficial way, so I could essentially be paid minimum wage to do teaching. So I thought no, this isn't really a career. It's quite fun, and I enjoyed my two years, but it's not what I want to be doing for however many years of my life.

A OK. So how do you see your career, in teaching, now that you are in it? Well, you are in it, but about to start it proper, so to speak?

X Do I see myself on a career ladder?

A Yes.

X Not particularly.

A No.

X No.

A Just focussing on...

X Focusing on classroom teaching.

A Fair enough. OK. And so no other options you considered in the meantime? Or at university, milk round or..?

X No, nothing else leapt out at me as...

A That's fine. And this is a bit of a tricky question, but do feel free to be honest. Have there been any points up to now which you thought that maybe teaching was not right for you?

X No, I can't...can't think...sometimes I have these silly, poorly organised, days where I just think I am useless at organising my life. But that would occur in life. So I haven't seen that yet as a reason not to be a teacher. Just a reason for good old self-flagellation.

A Well, that's common among teachers. Is there anything you can imagine might cause you to give up teaching in the future?

X Tricky. I don't want to become one of the bitter old people you see in the staffroom. And I like to think I wouldn't. At the moment I'm still very naïve and even the naughty ones I think have got that spark in them. Whereas some of the other

members of the department disagree, and aren't looking forward to teaching them next year.

A        So you do see those bitter cynics in the staffroom.

X        Even among some of the really good teachers, which is a bit disappointing. But perhaps they are just getting it out in the staffroom, and it lets them enter the classroom totally free.

A        Yes, that's true. OK, so just to go back to school, you went to a boys' grammar school, and your experience there was pretty much positive.

X        Yes.

A        And anything in particular stand out, do you remember enjoying particular classes? Do you remember certain teachers, for positive or negative reasons?

X        Yeah, hated my history teacher, and it didn't help that I had him for years seven, eight and nine, so that subject got dropped straightaway, at the first available opportunity.

A        Can you remember why you hated him?

X        Don't know, just...I don't think I ever writ enough for him, and he didn't like that. Probably my fault as well.

A        You didn't get positive feedback, so...

X        Yes, and similarly with one of my English teachers that I had for GCSE, she just took a dislike to me, I think, and at several points would say – X, where is your homework? At which point I would show it to her, having marked it, and just not recorded it in her markbook, after she'd reprimanded me in front of the class.

A Oh, gosh, more than once, you mean.

X Yes, a couple of times. So yes, they were a couple of negative things, but generally I think part of the reason why I continued with classics all the way through was just because it was a brilliant department, all the way through, everybody was very positive. A good sense of humour as well, which is quite important, I think. They always made the lesson seem entertaining, so that was good. Similarly there was one of my chemistry teachers, again, he was quite a young teacher, he was quite young actually when he started, and it was his first teaching job at the grammar school, so he came in very fresh faced, and he's not anymore but...

A Still there.

X Yeah, he's moved up to deputy head now. He's still very funny, but again it was a pleasure being taught by him, as well. I think it was the funny teachers I liked more.

A Oh, interesting. Well, that's good, because that moves on to the next question, which is what do you think makes a good teacher?

X Yeah, funny ones. And also the ones who essentially know their students. I had a couple, who, you could tell from reports and parents evenings and things, just didn't really know who you were. People like art teachers, I had a couple of art teachers where, if you weren't really, really good, or really naughty, then you were anonymous essentially. You'd be set a piece of work, you'd do it for a triple lesson, so about an hour and a half, and as long as you weren't creating a masterpiece in one corner, or flicking paint at each other in the other corner, then just keep your head down and you'd be fine.

A And what about...is that how you see yourself, basically? You manage your students with a sense of humour, and get to know them?



X Yes, I like to have quite a good rapport with my students, even if not overly funny with some classes, because I can't manage it. I can't manage to be funny and strict, not with all of them.

A Yes.

X Yes, that's what I'm kind of aiming for, a good rapport, approachable but firm, that's the ultimate aim. But need to work on it a bit, I think.

A Well, that's normal, don't worry about that. And so has your experience up to now, of teaching, confirmed or contradicted what you thought it might be, or perhaps a mixture of both, or maybe you weren't sure what it would be

X It sounds funny, but I've been surprised by how much goes on behind the scenes, in terms of sort of staff collaboration and things. It wasn't something I really had considered, all of the sort of moderation and especially now at exam times, things like swapping papers and where are you, where are you, that was something that naively I just hadn't considered. Yes, stuff behind the scenes, I suppose, hadn't really occurred to me a huge amount.

A But that's been a good thing, or..?

X Yes, definitely, to see the swapping of ideas, practice, between the...I mean, it's especially been good that I've been in two quite large departments, I think, for that. That's been very useful, just to either, either for me, to see different staff teaching different lessons, which I might then, for example at [SE1] I walked into a staffroom and commented on one of [colleague's] lessons, which [another colleague] then heard, and said – oh, I like that idea – just noted it down, and tried it himself the next day. So the whole sharing of ideas was something that just hadn't occurred to me I suppose.

A No, an added bonus. Great. I know you've touched on this a little bit; how much did you find out about teaching before you decided to apply for the course? Formally or informally really, just chatting or investigating?

X I did, as I mentioned, one of the lads who went to the grammar with me, his parents were teachers, and I'd had a couple of chats with them, and also one of the guys who I, when I went to university, one of the guys I lived with for a year, his parents were teachers in Leicester, so I would chat to him about the fact that I wanted to teach. And he would mention some of the, again, it was quite a one-sided thing, he would mention some of the really good things that his mum enjoyed about it, but all the bits that she absolutely hated.

A Do you remember what kind of things she absolutely hated?

X Paperwork.

A And what did you sort of think about that? Or did you just think it can't be that bad.

X I was just thinking to myself, well, it's a necessary evil, I think everyone seems to be going that way, so I'm going to be doing it and if I will be doing the paperwork that's just what happens. I don't think I saw it as something totally off-putting, you know.

A No.

X A necessary evil really.

A Yes, even if it's not paperwork there must be necessary evils in every job.

X I think I saw a book in a second hand shop, just something along the lines...it wasn't quite Getting the Buggers to Behave, or one of those, something along those lines, I think. Sort of practical advice for teaching. This was in my last year at university, I think. So I think I picked that up and gave that a read, and it was, again, quite interesting.

A Was that in the same series, do you think, or was it the same type of title?

X Same type of title.

A And was there anything in there that, again, not would have put you off, but did you pick up..?

X One chapter that really surprised me, as a chapter within it, was conserving your voice, and just having an entire chapter devoted to conserving your voice, taking on lots of water, which, again, brought to light, sort of just made me think about things I hadn't really an idea of.

A And none of that put you off. Again, just surprised you.

X Mm, and then, of course, I had the course and it became clear that all this teacher talking time shouldn't...

A Yes, you don't need to use your voice that much. I suppose some people are just more sensitive, as well, to nodules and things like that.

X Yes, [SE2 mentor] is terrible at the moment.

A Yes, she couldn't speak, actually.

X She's still quiet. For two weeks near inaudible.

A She should have stayed at home for longer, I think, by the sounds of it. OK, just thinking...what are people's reactions to you when you say..?

X I'm a teacher, or I'm a Latin teacher?

A Both really. Either, or both.

X        When I say I'm a teacher it's mainly the – GASP – who are you teaching? And no matter what answer I give I'm sure they would go – ooh, I couldn't teach them. It happens with both, I think. And I've spoken, normally it's – oh I don't think I could teach teenagers, I'd be OK with little ones, but not too little. That's generally the reaction I get.

A        And the classical element?

X        What is classics? That is the classic one. Or – why are you teaching that?

A        Yes.

X        I get bored justifying it now.

A        Yes. I do the same...

X        Beyond it's the only education that really matters.

A        Well, quite. Quite. And then we sort of, I think might have mentioned salary or careers and things, do you see teaching as a materially rewarding job? As obviously people tend to complain about pay.

X        More than enough for me. I've just been thinking about how much more money I'm going to have next year than I've ever had. I'm sure in a few years I'll get angry and want more, but at the moment I'm very, very, happy with the idea of a teacher's wage.

A        OK. Happy as in surprised, or had you not really thought about how much you'd get paid?

X        No, I hadn't really thought about it. It was a figure. I think it was a month ago, I was looking for places for next year, and I was trying to work out what my disposable income was, and I will have a lot more disposable income than I've had before, so that's quite nice.

A OK, and you went to a single sex grammar school, you are going to teach in a single sex grammar school, do you see yourself staying in the grammar system, state generally?

X I would like to stay in the state sector, ideally, probably grammar schools.

A You might not be able to put your finger on why, other than it's what you know?

X It is what I know, and also I do quite like the idea of it. From a teacher's perspective as well.

A Right.

X The...yeah, I like the *fairly* diverse, perhaps, mix that you don't get at a private school. But also the fact that I will be teaching bright children.

A I don't want to put words in your mouth or thoughts in your head, but it sounds like it was quite a pivotal point for you when somebody suggested that you might go to grammar school.

X Yes, it was. It was quite formative, I suppose. I am quite defensive of the grammar school system. I have had quite a few arguments with [another student anti-selection]. You can mention that.

A Because she's going to be teaching at one?

X She has major issues with it, because kids get coached up for it. And it's only the wealthy that can afford that.

A Did you have coaching? No.

X I didn't really. Did you?

A Did I have coaching? No.

X I was bought one of those WHSmith packs on verbal reasoning, they were really good fun.

A Exactly. Like doing Sudoku or something. That's a diversion. Do you, well, going back to hypotheticals, do you think your life would have been different if you hadn't gone...I don't know what the other school was your friends went to?

X Probably not. I was talking, about a month ago I went back to [home area], well, I go back quite a lot really, but I bumped into somebody in the same year as me, who was actually dissuaded from taking the 11+, and he is now a chemistry teacher in, I think, a different boys school, in a boys' school in [home area], and has been...this is his second year now, I think. So he's...

A So you would probably have taken that path, whatever.

X I know quite a few people who went to the school thirty seconds across the road from me, rather than forty five minutes, and it seemed that if you were willing to work then it was fine. I wouldn't have had any problem going there. Maybe not a Latin teacher.

A No, geography.

X Maybe.

A I think the only thing that I've missed, but it probably hasn't had a big influence is a few people have mentioned the advertising that's been, in recent years, on the telly. Become a teacher, if you can teach, all that kind of...

X Yes.

A Do you remember noticing that, or..? It's always in the news anyway. Did that make you..?

X I noticed them. I don't think it told me anything that I didn't already know. All the ones about Leon getting very, having that magical phase when he works out what quantum mechanics is, I quite liked the idea of that anyway, without it being put into TV advert form.

A So you were already thinking about it.

X Yes, I can't think that they added anything new. What other ones did they have? There was always one about the money as well.

A Oh yes, you can earn...

X You can earn up to this amount.

A Yes, in a particular circumstance.

X Yes. I don't think the adverts did anything for me really, especially because I was constantly searching for things like the TES, and...it is...what is it, canteach.org because I'd gone to that and signed up for it and their mailing list and every time I checked my hotmail there was one down the side, so I just...

A Blanked them out.

X Blanked them out. Silly suggestive advertising.

A Yes, OK, so no influence there. Is there anything else..?

X If anything they dissuaded me, I think. I had already signed up for the Can Teach website, and every time I looked into my hotmail there was another thing telling me to sign up. Please, go away.

A Yes. Is there anything that you can think of that we haven't mentioned that you think might have been an influence in your decision?

X My dad was always very encouraging. He really didn't want me to be a bricklayer. I don't think I could have been. LAUGHS

A Is that what he did?

X Yes.

A Or does, still, probably.

X He's now a bricklaying tutor.

A Ah, aha, so do you think he's been influenced by you?

X Perhaps. And also he's been influenced by the fact that he doesn't like staying out in the cold anymore. Yes, he has been influenced by me. And the last four weeks, I think, I've been, because he's been doing his DTLLS, yes, I think that's the abbreviation, Diploma for Teaching In the Lifelong Learning Centres?

A Oh yes.

X So I now get summoned back to [home] every weekend to help him with fitting Vygotsky into his....

A Oh really, gosh.

X X, I need to write a scheme of work. Fine. Tell me about differentiation. Uhhh.

A That's great for you though, because, what I mean is it makes you think about what you have to do.



X It does. It is very interesting but...

A You've had enough of it now.

X There is a bit of that. And also, because it's run by City and Guilds, they seem to have a very different set of hoops that you need to jump through to the QTS standards.

A OK, that is interesting. So you've perhaps inspired him, as well as the cold weather in the winter.

X Yes, he tells me, I think it's just because he doesn't want to give me any money, he tells me he's taken a drop in wages.

A Yes, possibly.

X I think he's right. But it is much more regular and he can take holidays and not worry about not being paid for a fortnight, or something along those lines. So much happier.

A Does your mum work?

X She does, yes, in the aforementioned take away.

A Oh, right, so she hasn't decided to go and teach somewhere?

X She's not done any kind of teaching thing, no.

A OK, thank you very much. I might come back to you, if that's alright, if I think of something.

X Yes, of course.

ENDS 40.58

## **APPENDIX VIII: Transcript interview 2Ginny**

A: (00:10) I'm just going to start with summarising what we said last time to make sure I've got the right end of the stick. So you did think about teaching after you left university but you just wanted a break, so it was in the back of your mind and you said it seemed like more of a grown up job. But even thinking that you did fill out an application, almost until the last point so were you thinking "well it is a grown up job but I ought to apply for it now"?

X: (00:45) I think I sort of got so far because I really liked the idea of it but the thought of going straight back into university then being a teacher in a year's time, the actual practicalities of it made me think "not just yet". It dawned on me that if I got the place I was going for I would be starting in September and I thought that was a bit much.

A: (01:19) Your university tutors mentioned something to you at the very end of the course at the finals dinner. Was it that you talked to them about the fact that you might want to teach Classics in a state comprehensive or who brought the subject up?

X: (01:38) I think we were talking about what we would do after university and the subject of teaching came up and I remember saying "the problem is I would really like to teach in a state school but with Classics I'm not really sure that's possible". Then my tutor said "of course it is. Lots of people are doing it, so and so from a few years ago". So, when I hadn't really considered it before, I knew it was there but I thought it was extremely limited, so I think they made me aware of the possibility that people they knew who were doing it and it was possible to teach it in a state school.

A: (02:29) At that stage, when you were thinking about teaching, were you actually thinking about doing a PGCE in something else?

X: (02:36) I think I thought about the possibility of doing it in History, maybe. Because I wanted to do it in a state school the thought did cross my mind to do it in another subject.

A: (02:52) And, without putting words in your mouth, do you think the approval of your tutors was an influence as well?

X: (03:00) Massively. The year I was applying, around November, I went to see one of my tutors, my other tutor had died, he died quite suddenly a few months previously. The existing tutor said he had always spoken about me separately and said that they thought I would make a good teacher, and I don't think I've forgotten that. They seemed to know me better than I knew myself what I wanted to do. So it was a big encouraging factor.

A: (03:43) And then you had some encouraging and discouraging factors in your family. So there's lots of teaching in your family. So I'm guessing they were all influential in some way, though some of them were negative about it.

X: (03:58) I think if I'm honest, my dad was the one who said "you don't want to go into teaching; you'll never make any money." Although interestingly recently, moving to London, he's said "you don't want to live in London; all the people who live in London aren't as sensible as you, they've got to work in London and haven't chosen sensible careers like you have", so finally he's coming round to the idea. When he wasn't being totally encouraging I think I sort of knew that deep down he probably is. I think had I come from a background where there was no teaching, because my mum and dad had trained as teachers, if it was all corporate I think I would have found it more difficult to go into it. But the fact that there is teaching there, even though they don't do it so much any more, I think helps.

A: (04:54) Do you think that would have been because of their expectations?

X: (04:48) Probably. None of us, out of my brother and sisters are ever money making types, none of us have been. I think my dad wanted me to be more an academic

than a teacher. He doesn't like the idea of me working in a difficult state school but then he was ok with it being Classics because I was bound to find a nice school. In fact looking at my timetable now I've got 50% sixth-form for next year. For me that terrifies me slightly because it's a lot of small classes but he said "oh no, that's brilliant. You won't have the problems of the big classes and you'll be alright with the discipline". I think when he was a teacher he was telling me how difficult he found the classroom management.

A: (05:45) Yes, you said it was a difficult comprehensive. But you also said the fact that he didn't like it and didn't want you to do it was maybe an incentive for you to go and do it. Do you think you were kicking back against that a little bit?

X: (06:01) To a certain extent, I think if I could do something that he... well I don't know, it's the relationship with dads really. If I could do it, and do it in a good school. It's funny looking at the results for [new school] and he seems proud, it seems like it's my report coming through and he's quite pleased about it. In a way to be at a school that's doing well and getting good results, you can be successful and be proud.

A: (06:41) And your mum was quite an influence in you enjoying Classics? But also your teachers at school? Do you think they both came at the same time?

X: (06:52) I think so. My first experience of Classics, I was at primary school; I was taken to Rome and round the Coliseum; mum bought me Robert Graves for Christmas, and then Lindsey Davis; every year I'd have books that were classics related. She's always pulling out articles. I think the first few years before I got Mr XXXXX my GCSE teacher, it was quite inspiring but I think most of the inspiration came from my parents, my mum mostly. But then he took over and was very inspiring as well. But they really did encourage me in Latin very early on, my mum especially.

A: (07:34) And when your mum was choosing these books for you, was she choosing them or had you put them on your birthday list.

X: (07:42) No, I hadn't. I think I went to the Coliseum, really liked it then suddenly I Claudius appeared and she said "I think you'll really like this" and then Quo Vadis, I can't remember if Quo Vadis was before I Claudius, maybe it was first, and she said "I read this when I was younger", I think it's a Polish author even, which is what my mum read when she was a little girl. I think it came from her mostly, and then she bought me Winnie Ille Pu, so every year I got a little package of books relating to Classics.

A: (08:26) So Classics was always there, teaching was in the family. And then you used to play childhood games of marking books and taking registers.

X: (08:33) I'd forgotten that. Yes, I used to pretend to be a teacher, although I've noticed my 7 year old niece does that now so maybe it's not too unusual. I used to love to pretend taking the register, marking books.

A: (08:47) And was that something you'd seen your parents doing?

X: (08:51) No I think that was purely a school thing. I enjoyed school and I think I had lovely teachers; only one very strict awful teacher at primary school but he and I got on because I was a bit of a swot. I think I really liked them, they were very gently and kind.

A: (09:16) So you said after thinking about teaching or PGCE that actually part of you didn't do it because you didn't want to admit to yourself that that's what you wanted to do because it's not a very exciting job, so do you think it's negative, teaching can be seen as a not very high status job compared with some, for various reasons.

X: (09:40) I think it really depends who you hang out with or what your perception is. Myself, I thought my friends who work in the city would see it as not that exciting and certainly not high flying. But then at this stage in my group of friends' lives, people seem to be changing their jobs left, right and centre, and when I say "I'm teaching" and they say "That's brilliant. I've always wanted to teach". But I think that's more a perception I put on myself; no-one I've told that I'm a teacher, has anyone said "that's a bit boring". They seem to be quite enamoured with the idea themselves so I

think that's possibly something which I thought myself rather than generally what other people were like.

A: (10:29) Because it came across as though there was that slight negative aspect about teaching at the time, but then the very positive, the opposite, that classics was a prestigious thing but teaching maybe not so.

X: (10:44) I still do think that. If I tell people I'm a teacher I say I'm a "Classics Teacher actually", I love telling people I'm a classics teacher. I still do think that has an exciting prestigious element to it... a teacher of Latin and Greek. But I think my thoughts on that have changed over the last year because all teachers are as exciting as each other in some ways but I think at first I thought classics was the really exciting thing.

A: (11:23) And even when you were very young and then at school it seemed like you saw it as something that was quite prestigious and a bit special. Was that partly, I think you said because you knew a lot of people who didn't go to selective schools and didn't do it.

X: (11:45) Yes I had a big friendship group who lots of them didn't really know what Latin was. And the fact that classes were small, which they still are where I'm teaching now. We had 3 of us doing Latin A level and we were off timetable so we didn't do General Studies, because we were the special Latin ones and 5 of us did GCSE versus all other subjects which had 25 per class so we did feel special.

A: (12:12) And alongside that it seemed to be a subject that was more challenging to you than some others.

X: (12:21) I think my teacher almost made that quite clear, in some good and bad ways, would make out other subjects were nonsense, I think history he respected, but all other subjects I think he was "all this nonsense with English this days", that sort of thing. So in a way he drilled into us that Latin was the hard one.

A: (12:43) And it was something that you did if you were clever, and if you wanted to go to a good university?

X: (12:50) Yes, he was insistent about that. He said if you want to go to Oxford you should do Classics A Level.

A: (12:56) And you partly seemed to want to go to Oxford perhaps because of what he said and also your sister had been, and all your siblings had been to good universities. Was that family influence or expectation?

X: (13:15) In a way I think that was expectation because, in terms of grades for A level and GCSEs I'd done the best out of the 5 of us and given my oldest brother and sister both went to Oxford I felt of course I'm going to go there, which is dreadful in a way because I'm sure it was close. Of course I wasn't assuming by any means because the interview was hard and the translation was hard and I just wonder how I would have felt had I not got in; I think it would have been quite crushing really, I wasn't really prepared for that. So yes I think that was quite a bit of expectation.

A: (14:03) And you talked about when you were at school and doing your own lessons, thinking about it being this club, and you said you actually worked on your own. I wasn't quite sure when that was? Was that at secondary school?

X: (14:24) Yes that was secondary school; that was about year 8 or year 9. I was given a huge dictionary and Ecce Romani and sent to the library for the whole lesson. Because I think I'd read the story, I'd read it ahead and probably said something facetious like "I've read this one already" and that was the whole lesson so she said go out and do this instead.

A: (14:56) So it was special within the class and then you were even more special and different because you went off to do something different. You said it was fine, then went to university and felt less special.

You talked about some other things that you had considered doing; publishing, charity jobs and then the Oxford English dictionary job. It seemed as if you decided against those because there was less contact with people?

X: (15:54) I think it was the place, for personal reasons really; the Oxford English Dictionary was silent rooms, so that was a big factor. And also all my friends were living in London and earning quite big salaries and if done that job I'd have been living at home with my parents and I thought it wasn't quite as exciting.

A: (16:19) And publishing?

X: (16:24) I did a bit of that. I think I thought of publishing because I like reading books but the world of publishing, or the bit I saw of it, has nothing to do with that. But I think I thought when I was applying for jobs, that I like reading books so therefore I must apply for publishing. It was before I knew about different jobs out there.

A: (16:48) And how did you actually get to working for the MP?

X: (16:55) My boyfriend at the time was very political and he'd got a job via this website for a lobbying company and I was just getting into politics so I just went to this website and there was an internship available where all you had to do was write a letter. I'm not sure I thought it would lead to much but I got phoned up straight away. So it wasn't a conscious decision to work for the Lib Dems; I just saw it advertised, heard of [the MP] before, all you needed was a letter and a degree.

A: (17:42) And then when you were doing that you reached the stage of being not very happy. And when people asked you what you wanted to do it seemed almost an instinct to say you wanted to teach.

X: (17:57) The MP was about a year and the lobbying company afterwards. I got asked quite a lot "Are you enjoying your job?" And I'd just say "I don't really want to talk about it". After a while people would say "what do you really want to be doing?" and I said "what I really want to do is teaching" or I'd meet teachers and say I'd really



love to do that. Then my friend said “why don’t you just apply and do it? You can you know.”

A: (18:28) Do you think that was actually a prompt for you to go and do it?

X: (18:31) Yes, I think it was a “taking control of my life” situation. I did used to wake up in the morning thinking “urgh” and from Sunday lunchtime onwards I’d be “urgh, hate it”. And I wasn’t happy and I was taking it out on other people round me. That went on for a few weeks until I suddenly thought I can change it and it’s not like I don’t have opportunities; I have a degree, I should be able to get onto a PGCE somewhere; why don’t I just take control and change.

A: (19:11) And I know you said you’d helped siblings, and your best friend with homework. But before actually starting work had you had any teacher-like roles, were you prefect, did you do any leadership, at school or university?

X: (19:33) I did access at university so I showed young people around. I did a summer job, summer school as well. I wasn’t really much of a prefect really, so not a huge amount.

A: (19:57) So just to be clear, you were thinking about perhaps another subject because you wanted to go into state comprehensive teaching. But actually when we came back to the question again last time it seemed like actually it is Classics because you want Classics to be in the state comprehensive system. So you changed your view from you first thoughts of teaching?

X: (20:28) I think I didn’t realise at first that Classics could be taught in state schools, so that’s why I was considering other things. But I don’t know how I could have persuaded... I do teach History now a little but the first thing at an interview was to tell them how much I loved Classics; that was the main thrust of it and if that wasn’t my driving force I wouldn’t be so happy in my job now.

A: (21:08) And now that you've been doing it for a year what do you think makes good teaching or good teachers?

X: (21:15) I think the more work and effort you put in with planning and also monitoring individual students' performance then the more they're going to get out of it and the more you'll get out of it. I think the more time I've spent thinking how lessons work; they're the most successful lessons, first and foremost. Secondly I think, in terms of actual lessons, having a lot of variety and energy during the lesson; it's all too easy just to walk in with a book and say "right translate the first Latin story" and you sit down and let them get on with it. It's not the best teaching, but having the energy to go round and assess individuals, that's really what you should be doing in all lessons if you have the energy to do it; so being energetic and well prepared are the most important things.

A: (22:36) In terms of your expectations of teaching, now you have been a 'proper' teacher for a year, have your views changed at all?

X: (22:50) I think I thought on the PGCE that proper teachers didn't really plan as much as we were told to plan. But certainly at [current school] and actually other schools as well, it seems to me they do actually plan a lot; there may be experienced teachers who've done it hundreds of times so can dig out slides but there is a lot of planning. It's rare that a teacher goes into a lesson without really any plan at all. I don't know why but I think I thought that's what they'd be doing but actually that's not really the case. Expectations as well, again at my school, there's not too much moaning or complaining about the students, which I think maybe there was a bit of at my first placement school; but not so much here, there seems to be a generally quite a positive attitude towards the boys. There's also quite a lot of internal politics which I'm not sure I was fully prepared for; "So and so is in with so and so and that's how they got that job, it's all been pre planned". I wasn't sure I knew very much about that. But in terms of the actual teaching and the boys' response they've all been as good as I thought they'd be; very enthusiastic especially at the end of term – after their exams I was expecting this period where I wouldn't be able to get them to do anything, that they'd totally lose focus and concentration but even year 9s who were giving up Latin did these amazing

projects for me. They were still enthusiastic and eager to please, I suppose, whether that was them, me or their parents. So that was nice, I really thought they'd give up.

A: (25:02) Have you thought any more, I know it's only been a year, about your career plans.

X: (25:07) Not really. I applied for this Careers job mainly because I thought it might show that I'm eager and it would be nice to have a bigger salary I suppose. But I don't think that was really reflective of what I want to do. I'd love to be in a position to be, say Head of Key Stage 3, within the department, not to be Head of year 9, pastoral. I prefer the academic side, but I'm happy as I am for the next 2 years at least.

A: (25:52) And when we spoke before the pastoral side perhaps appealed to you a bit more but you acknowledged that was probably because you'd done a bit more on your placements, but that's swapped round now.

X: (26:03) I'm doing sixth form stuff at the moment which I really like but I recognise that if I wanted to move up within that sphere that means Head of sixth form which means UCAS and it's all extremely technical and a different sort of thing to maybe being Head of year 7 which I haven't seen much of and I'm not sure that sort of thing appeals yet.

A: (26:29) So I'll ask the same question as last time about whether at this stage you can see anything that might cause you to give up teaching?

X: (26:40) No I don't think so. I think I've been very lucky. I think I said last time, if I had that nightmare situation, if I had colleagues who weren't supportive and were dreadful I'd certainly want to move schools. And if that happened more than once, if I found myself not able to fit into a department then I think that might eventually...I think I've realised more so than ever that actually having a nice supportive department where we all get on is really important. There's other departments in school where they can't sit in the same office as each other and I think I would find that unbearable

because you do work so closely together. But that would make me want to move schools as opposed to from teaching altogether.

A: (27:37) And thinking about the type of school, your ideal at the time was a comprehensive, a non selective state school, practicalities are important but would you say that is still your ideal?

X: (27:53) I think so although I have loved teaching in a grammar school. I don't really know what the difference is; of course there are boys at [current school] who really struggle with Latin and History and really can't write very well at all, and obviously they've got in on their mathematical ability. I've had friends come to visit and they've said "gosh you get through so much; you've got such a responsive bright class". It's lovely; I can't really get away from how much that is a huge part of why I enjoy teaching. Having said that if it could be a comprehensive that was still in quite a nice... not too difficult a comprehensive then that would be ideal because you wonder about yourself in a grammar school; they do brilliantly but there's always in the back of your mind that these are bright kids anyway and therefore there does feel a huge amount of pressure, especially with A level results, where they're getting As A\* and Bs across the department, I was extremely worried about that. But then you would be and there's no reason why I wouldn't feel like that in a comprehensive either. But having that expectation... in a way it's a bit sad, because some of the kids that don't do so well, some of the teachers say "they shouldn't be in this school". I think that's a dreadful thing to say, there's one boy in particular and they get singled out and I think that's the sort of talk you wouldn't get in a comprehensive, and probably that boy's misbehaving because he feels like that himself, he's probably picked up on it. So there's a certain grammar school snobbery attached to it. But if I'm totally honest I think I'm lucky staying where I am because I've had such a nice time there.

A: (30:09) Talking about that snobbery, when you wrote about your experience of school, that kind of inequality did come across and you specifically said that at your secondary school it appeared that some talents were more equal than others in the eyes of the school. Do you think you were aware of that at the time or just looking back on it?

X: (30:33) I think because of my sister I probably was, because she was more or less told she couldn't stay on at the school, even though she was brilliant. I don't think she even got a C at GCSE, I think she got all As and a B, maybe one C in French. But she was more or less told to go and I think if it wasn't for that I wouldn't have been quite so aware of it.

A: (31:15) And you also noted the lack of diversity at your school which you said gave a feeling of artificiality; again do you think that was something you were aware of at the time or having visited other schools?

X: (31:29) I think that's certainly a looking back thing because I grew up in a very suburban, deep dark [home county] so yeah I don't think I had any friends of a diverse background either so that's certainly looking back.

A: (31:45) And now that you've been doing it for a year do you see teaching as a rewarding profession, generally and materially?

X: (31:55) Absolutely. You hear people talking about their jobs and I don't join in with the "oh god this is dreadful". I like talking about my day; I enjoy seeing how they're doing in exams, despite being so nervous about it when they came through and they were all fine so I thought "that's brilliant". That's hugely rewarding and seeing the ones who got their grades to go to university, that's hugely rewarding, so yes, I think it is.

A: (32:38) And then with the material rewards you're alright with the practicalities of it?

X: (32:46) Yes. I was saying the other day that I'm now going to scale M3 or M4 so I'm on £28.3 next year, which is a pretty good salary. People always say you'll never earn any money teaching, but that's fine, it's my second year in, it's plenty.

A: (33:12) And then one thing that I did mention last time because other people had mentioned it was the TV adverts for teaching, which you said you viewed through your propaganda lenses so they didn't have much of an impact on you. But other people mentioned some of the TV programmes and films connected with teaching and Classics. I don't know whether you were aware of those any more than being an interesting film?

X: (33:45) I think I'm viewing them more now that I am a teacher. I don't think it's had much of an impact.

A: (34:08) Ok, I think that's everything.

(34:22)

## APPENDIX IX: Transcript interview 2 Amber

A: (03:05) I'm just going to start with summarising some of the things you said, whether they're still the case or you want to elaborate on them. You said that you liked your teachers at school, so although you hadn't thought about teaching specifically at that time it might have been that they might have acted as role models maybe? (I think you're probably right there.) And you also had a friend who wanted to be a German teacher and you said you thought that was quite strange that he'd always wanted to do that. I don't know whether we came to the conclusion that might have been an influence or probably wasn't but you didn't necessarily think "Oh maybe I'll think about teaching"

X: (03:58) I think it probably did enter into my head as an option but I think back then it's difficult to imagine what you wanted to do, when you hadn't done much of your degree or any of it; it's just a bit strange to think that's definitely what I want to do. I never had that much focus.

A: (04:17) But it was just one of the options available? (Yes)  
And then you perhaps implied that you didn't necessarily consider it straight away because you didn't want to be one of those people who thought "right, what can I do with my degree? I'll go and teach".

X: (04:39) I didn't want to finish uni and not consider anything else and say "Oh that's an option, I'll just do that"; I didn't feel like I knew what was out there.

A: (04:49) And then we talked quite a lot about 3 different jobs that all seemed to have something to do with Classics or young people or made you realise that you wanted to do something with Classics and young people. You mentioned that you didn't want to go into management and that was the job at [Royal Palace] that made you realise that, and that didn't have anything to do with Classics and it made you realise that was what you wanted to do. And then you went to study Greek at

university, after graduating and I don't think I asked you what prompted you to do that, was it simply that you were missing Classics?

X: (05:41) I did miss Classics and I knew that I was going to apply for the masters the following year and because it was the masters in Hellenistic world I knew I was going to have to do a bit of Greek. The woman who supervised my dissertation was the Greek tutor and she said come along to lectures if you want, just sit in on them and get to grips with it. But I decided it would be a better idea to actually complete the course, if I'm going to do the work anyway I might as well get credit for it. So that's what started me doing it really, and when I started it I loved it and that's really what got me into languages after having done Classical Studies. And now it's basically all I do!

A: (06:26) Then what had made you decide to apply for the Masters?

X: (06:32) I really missed Classics. For my undergrad dissertation I did it on Arsinoë II so the Hellenistic stuff I was quite interested in, so when they brought out the masters in the Hellenistic world I knew there was funding available; I'd already tried to get funding from the HRC, I think it was, for just a Classics masters and also for a Museum studies one and it was really difficult to get any money but because this was a new course and I'd been a student there before I knew I had a good chance of getting the funding and I was really interested in the core subject as well. So that was what prompted me to go for that.

A: (07:19) And then in the meantime all of these other things were playing their part in influencing you gradually. And you obviously really enjoyed the interactions you had with young kids, putting together the library collections and then with the older students when you were working at [university]. So do you think it was a gradual process over that time, over those 3 jobs?

X: (07:51) I think it felt like I didn't want to go and do another degree course without having tried to do anything different because I'd already done my degree and then my masters, not straightaway but quite quickly, and I felt maybe I should try to do something with what I've got or just get some experience and actually working and



then that led me into the education sort of route. And then it was quite difficult because I couldn't decide between primary or secondary but then the Classics thing kept coming up. Although I have to say now I'm not really decided, I'd quite happily teach younger children if the opportunity came up.

A: (08:47)      Okay, we'll come back to that one then. And it sounded as if there was maybe a key point when you were talking to some GCSE pupils at a higher education fair in [XXX] and you thought that it was a really important time for those students and that could be something you could be involved in. Was that the turning point or was there not really one?

X: (09:20)      I did like being involved with the university students but I think I enjoyed speaking to the younger students a bit more; just because they're at a point where they've got so many decisions to make; they've got to choose subjects and that leads to what they might do as a degree and I think it's getting much harder for children to make these decisions because the job market's so different; people don't necessarily go on to university. It just opened my eyes to how hard it might be and being in a school and making them make that sort of choice is actually quite a rewarding thing to do.

A: (09:56)      So thinking about choosing a career, you also mentioned that lots of friends had done law, they went to law school and then they were already in a career. But you weren't sure whether that bothered you or not but had you always thought "I will have a career", that it will be profession, at some point? Ultimately was that something that you thought or that people expected of you?

X: (10:24)      I think I definitely thought it was expected, but I don't know if I could actually imagine it happening because I think I just wasn't focussed enough on one particular thing. All my friends that did law knew they wanted to be lawyers and always had. And I found that concept quite strange, same with my friend who's a German teacher. I always felt my parents certainly expected me to have a career, so did everyone else, but I couldn't really visualise it.

A: (10:54) But there was definitely an expectation, even if they weren't pushing you, that was just the assumption that you would go into a career like that?

X: (11:02) Yes, but I think it's difficult when degree courses are not always vocations so it depends what you pick to do and what your strengths are.

A: (11:13) And it took you a while to pick Classics didn't it? You chose Philosophy, then put that off for a year, then started Philosophy and then changed your mind. When you changed your mind you obviously realised Philosophy wasn't for you; was it straight away that you thought you'd do Classics or did you have to think quite hard about what you'd do instead?

X: (11:38) Well I thought the only thing you could do to choose university subjects was choose what you'd enjoyed at school because you don't have experience of anything else and I'd done a tiny bit of Philosophy at school and I had enjoyed it but it's a completely different kettle of fish at university. And I just thought if there's something you'd do at uni and you're going to spend all that money and time on then it should be something you know you're reasonably good at and enjoy. From my exam results that seemed the most logical subject to pick.

A: (12:07) That makes sense. You mentioned in that context, the fact that your Classics teacher had been really enthusiastic and obviously had quite a difficult situation teaching several things to several students one time. But you mentioned that actually the Latin teaching had been a bit of a shambles; did you mean in the sense that you were all learning different things in one room? You obviously enjoyed your Latin so I wasn't quite sure what you meant by that.

X: (12:45) It was a shambles in the sense that there was too much going on at once. She couldn't give attention to everybody that needed it. And that's why it ended up being quite able students that were doing it because you needed to have that motivation to just get on with it. You weren't being helped all the time and if you needed help you had to go and ask for it. It wasn't the sort of supervision you'd expect in a class where the teacher's teaching one subject and all the students are working on

the same thing. It wasn't that she was a bad teacher; it was that she was trying to do too much and you had to be very focussed and committed in order to actually just do it.

A: (13:22) And you said in a way that's why you liked it because you could just get on with it yourself and work on it yourself and be independent.

X: (13:32) And I think the sense of achievement was more if you'd done that as well. .

A: (13:41) I wondered if that also made you feel special in a way. You mentioned other things; they often organised school trips and competition and lots of extra curricular stuff. It almost made it sound like a special club.

X: (13:58) Yeah it was. Because there were so few people doing it and there were extra things you could get involved in. It was almost extra curricular rather than part of school day.

A: (14:14) So it was quite different from your other subjects, in all respects really. Although you did say you liked English but more from the content point of view rather than the way it was taught. And so I suppose the creative writing and the literature to some extent come into Classics so it's not an unusual combination.

X: (14:42) I think it's very similar but my interest in the Classical world is so much greater than my interest in English because it's so varied and broad; Classics is much more specialised in a sense. It's nice to focus on the one thing. I enjoyed that more than all the different genres you could pick in English and all the different time periods and all the rest of it.

A: (15:08) Yes, and you said the same about Ancient History being much more interesting than Modern History, because it's so far removed; again that made it sound as if it was something a bit more special.

X: (15:28) I still see it like that. I'd much rather watch a documentary on something I can't imagine than on something that seems quite real.

A: (15:40) And obviously your mum had made you watch all of those old classical films which is quite a nice experience, a nice childhood memory of a bank holiday. Going back to your mum, she obviously had quite a different path, education-wise, from her brother, really because of her gender. Do you think that made you work harder and try harder? Being her daughter you had to be a successful career girl?

X: (16:32) I think so because she felt that she hadn't had the opportunity and I felt because they were putting so much effort and money and support into it that it was my responsibility to make sure I worked hard and did my best.

A: (16:48) You gave the impression that your dad was probably more laid back about it. (Yes)  
And also you said a lot of your mum's friends are primary teachers. But that had maybe put you off?

X: (17:06) I don't know if she had a bit of an inferiority complex because a lot of her friends were teachers and she felt they had a decent education and she'd not been given the opportunity and at the time she was quite defensive about things simply because she felt like she was being judged or she wasn't good enough.

A: (17:31) Do you think that had put you off teaching generally or primary specifically.

X: (17:38) It's difficult to say. That was when I was quite young. I did get the impression that she sometimes thought "they're teachers, they just say that and it's ridiculous, they've never worked in the real world, they've just gone back to school". That was the sort of comments and I thought "does she have a lot of respect for these people?" but then when I was at school she didn't seem to be like that with my teachers. She was quite different.

A:(18:05) So she obviously valued what you did at school and the people who helped you do it.

Then going back to primary, and as you say you were torn between primary and secondary, but one thing that did come across was that you went for secondary in the end because of the Classics and that really perhaps Classics more than teaching; that you wouldn't necessarily have been a teacher if not for Classics teaching? Obviously if you went into primary teaching you wouldn't necessarily have much Classics teaching.

X: (18:56) No. I think it's difficult because in my current job I teach years 5 & 6 and I really enjoy that and I can imagine doing that full time. But then you lose the Classics aspect of it and I have to say I am a bit torn; there are benefits to both. The problem now is more looking at jobs here that I could actually apply for; there's not a lot in terms of Classics. I could work somewhere very nice and teach primary, year 5 & 6 as I've been involved in that kind of thing. That maybe influencing me slightly now.

A:(19:40) Practicalities are an important influence so that's fair enough. Do you think your view or expectations of teaching have changed in the last year or has it just confirmed what you'd worked out by the end of your PGCE?

X: (20:04) Maybe a little. I think my school's quite different from your ordinary everyday school. I think that's something has maybe influenced me more; it's a prep school, it's very independent, it's a bit of a shambles sometimes. I see it as being quite different from my placement schools. I find it quite difficult sometimes to know what's going on because communication's not great. I sometimes wonder if I'd be happier in a state school where things are quite structured and I knew what to expect and there was more support there. In other ways, it's difficult because I'm left to my own devices, which is quite nice but you don't have your support that you'd have in a state school that has a department. I don't think my views on teaching will ever stay the same, I think they'll constantly change depending on where I am and the experiences I'm having. I think it's quite early on, having only done part time for the past year.

A: (21:14) As far as the practicalities go I think one of the things you said you hadn't realised for the PGCE was how much organisation and effort goes into planning

a lesson. But as far as the practicalities of teaching you haven't made any new discoveries?

X: (21:34) I don't think so. I think I've realised even more, how much work is involved outside of the classroom especially if you want to be successful. It's easy to throw a lesson together but it's not necessarily going to be a good one.

A: (21:50) You did mention something to do with state and independent schools, from your two placements, that you felt that actually Classics was more valued in the state schools, from those two experiences? And you've kept that view?

X: (22:14) I think with the school I'm at now the children know that it's there and it's always been there and it's something they have to do in year 5 & 6 and I don't think they necessarily appreciate it. That's not to say they don't work at it but if it was something that was set aside and a bit more special they'd make more effort. It's hard to say; because they're so young, I don't know if they really think of it in that way; it's just something else they have to do. I think they find it difficult to see the value in it and I also think their parents influence that. I've had a lot of children saying "my dad says he doesn't know why I do Latin" which I thought was quite an odd thing for a prep school. I've had that quite a lot. It's only been reintroduced since I've started, for years 5 & 6; it was always for 7 & 8 but that's a choice they make.

A: (23:30) And what do you think, now that you've done it for a bit longer, what do you think are the qualities of good teaching and good teachers?

X: (23:38) I think probably everything that we talked about in the PGCE, that's the way it is. It's fine knowing it in theory but in practice it is slightly different because you have to adapt to the environment that you're teaching in and it takes quite a long time to work out how to approach different classes, different age groups, different types of children; even things like how much time you have to teach the lesson has a massive impact on how you approach it and successful it is, and the levels of learning. I think that's something that's become quite obvious in the past year.

A: (24:19) And I'm sure that would be the same going to another school; you'd have to readjust.

X: (24:26) Absolutely. And all things like class size, the environment, are you always in the same room, really little things that you might not expect to affect the quality of your teaching really do and it can take quite a long time to settle in to that.

A: (24:42) As you say, it's quite early on in your career, but I wonder if you have any thoughts about a career path?

X: (24:54) This is probably not the best time to ask that. I don't know, it's difficult with the practicalities at the moment, I don't know what I'm going to do when I have the baby and how often I'm going to want to work. At the moment I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing and would continue if my hours aren't cut. At the moment it's not so much about the career but about making everything work.

A: (25:38) So it sounds like you're still in the same situation where you hadn't really thought you'd be interested in being Head of Department or some kind of management role with more paperwork.

X: (25:52) I'm not sure I'd mind doing that but I don't think I've got the experience at all yet. I think it would take a long time to get it, or a long time for me to feel confident enough to be doing that. With me working part time I don't feel like I've been doing it for very long. But then I suppose it's probably quite rewarding to have your own area that you're in charge of. I can imagine it happening but quite far off in the future.

A: (26:30) We talked about whether you saw teaching as materially rewarding and you seemed to think that it was really. As you say you get the other rewards so the money's not bad all things considered. So you still feel like that?

X: (26:55) Well everyone's struggling now aren't they; it's the age old story. It's difficult because with me looking at jobs in the state sector, having worked in a prep

school, the wages are better in a prep school and the idea of having to drop several thousands does not appeal. That's not to say I wouldn't do it if I thought it was the right post because I think ultimately job satisfaction and doing something you enjoy is the most important thing but obviously there are practicalities to consider, especially at the moment, I'd have to seriously think about it. On the whole it's not too bad, but then I get quite annoyed when I speak to people who do something that I don't think is particularly skilled and end up earning the same amount of money as an NQT or somebody in their first year of proper teaching; it seems a bit unfair given the amount of work you've had to do and all the preparation outside of school. People think you get long holidays and finish at 3.30. Especially in my school, it starts at 8 and you teach all day so it's nothing like that.

A: (28:19) Obviously you have your immediate practicalities to think about but overall is there anything you can think of now that might cause you to give up teaching?

X: (28:30) I don't think so. When I think about teaching and then doing something else I'd much rather be teaching than anything else I can think of. The only other thing that might attract me is education but maybe in a museum environment, something like that, because that's very similar.

A: (28:50) You mentioned when you've been travelling that that was also an influence in teaching, in that you'd see something, an artefact or a site, and think that actually that would be great to get someone else to understand it and be interested in it.

X: (29:08) That's something that I'm still attracted to; going on school trips and things, gives you that little insight into what that might be like. That's quite appealing. If something came up like that I'd probably be quite interested.

A: (29:26) So still in education. I think the only other influence you mentioned was the number of films, or programmes in general, over the last ten years, about the classical world, that confirmed for you the fact that people think it's important or



interesting. You felt that was a really good thing for teachers to have. I don't know whether you've been able to make use of that or whether it's still a nice influence but you haven't necessarily exploited it.

X: (30:10) A little bit; I've used that terrible adaptation of the Odyssey. It's very good for schools because there's nothing you can't show them in it; obviously they're interested in various different films like Percy Jackson and things, but then it's not always accurate. But I think just it being there is useful and you can refer to things, even if it's not a particularly classics based film there's something in it that's similar you can use to get them thinking along the right lines. I've done that a few times in lessons but I think there's probably more that could be made of it. I think it's easier with older children, with the restrictions on what you can show them.

A: (31:01) Yes, that's true. Do you think there's anything we haven't mentioned either last time or this time that might have been an influence? (No) Thanks you very much.

(31:27)